DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 643 EF 006 076

AUTHOR Lode, Marlin D.
TITLE Factors Affecting the Outcomes of School Bond Elections in Iowa.
PUB DATE 1999-05-00
NOTE 186p.; Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of South Dakota.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bond Issues; *Community Support; Educational Facilities Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; *Influences; Interviews; School Construction; School Expansion; School Support; Voting
IDENTIFIERS *Iowa

ABSTRACT

In spite of a nationwide concern for the crumbling infrastructure of school buildings, the prospects of passing bond issues to repair or replace buildings are elusive. This study examined positive and negative factors that affected the outcomes of school bond elections in four purposefully-selected school districts in Iowa. Variables that contributed to the success of bond elections in two school districts and the failure of bond elections in two school districts were analyzed. Included in the study was an examination of relationships that existed between the variables contributing to the outcomes of the bond issues and selected characteristics of the individual school districts. Results of the survey were analyzed using exploratory data analysis. Interviews were conducted with the superintendent, a member of the citizen bond promotion committee, a newspaper editor, and a banker from four Iowa school districts that held school bond elections in their communities between 1994 and 1998. The interview instrument used in the study contained a series of structured questions with respect to bond elections and questions designed to gather perceptions regarding factors that were critical to the results of the election. Findings of the study indicated the importance of an organized and well-represented citizen committee in the promotion of the school bond election. In addition, the findings supported the need for bond promotion groups to identify "yes" voters and make sure they vote to ensure success. Good internal and external communication and use of the media were supported by the findings as factors essential to a successful bond election. (Appendices contain study materials. Contains 42 references.) (Author/EV)

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS IN IOWA

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Division of Education Administration
Education Administration Program
in the Graduate School
University of South Dakota
May 1999

EF 006 076

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ABSTRACT

Analysis of Factors Affecting the Outcomes of School Bond Elections in Iowa

Marlin Lode, Ed.D., Educational Administration, University of South Dakota, 1999

Dissertation directed by Dr. Phil Vik

In spite of a nationwide concern for the crumbling infrastructure of school buildings, the prospects of passing bond issues to repair or replace buildings are elusive. This study examined the positive and negative factors that affected the outcomes of school bond elections.

The purpose of the study was to examine factors that affected the outcomes of school bond elections in four purposefully selected school districts in Iowa. Variables that contributed to the success of bond elections in two school districts and the failure of bond elections in two school districts were analyzed. Included in the study was an examination of relationships that existed between the variables contributing to the outcome of the bond issues and selected characteristics of the individual school districts. Results of the survey were analyzed using exploratory data analysis.

The researcher interviewed the superintendent, a member of the citizen bond promotion committee, a newspaper editor, and a banker from four Iowa school districts that held school bond elections in their communities between 1994 and 1998. The interview instrument utilized in the study

contained a series of structured questions with respect to bond elections and questions designed to gather perceptions regarding factors that were critical to the results of the election.

Findings of the study indicated the importance of an organized and well-represented citizen committee in the promotion of the school bond election. In addition, the findings supported the need for bond promotion groups to identify "yes" voters and make sure they vote to ensure success. Good internal and external communication and use of the media were supported by the findings as factors essential to a successful bond election.

The results of this study can serve as a resource for school administrators, school board members, and campaign teams who wish to initiate school facility improvements requiring issuance of bonds.

This abstract of approximately 300 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Signed _____
Professor in Charge

DOCTORAL COMMITTEE

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Marlin Lode find it satisfactory and recommend that it be approved.

Dr. Phil Vik, Chair

Dr. Mark Baron

Dr. Perry Uhl

Dr. Robert Wood

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I offer my gratitude to the individuals who provided their support and encouragement during my work on this dissertation. I am especially grateful to my advisor and mentor, Dr. Phil Vik, for his guidance, assistance, and many contributions provided throughout the writing of this dissertation. The members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Mark Baron, Dr. Perry Uhl, and Dr. Robert Wood, are commended for their facilitation and expertise in reviewing this study.

My thanks are given to the superintendents and community representatives who took the time to be interviewed. Their insights provided the basis for this dissertation. I thank members of the administrative team, school board, and the KIDS Committee of the Cherokee Community School District for providing the incentive for embarking on this study.

Specifically, I thank my wife, Sherry, for her boundless support, encouragement, sacrifices, and love that kept me on track and allowed me to reach my educational goals. I appreciate the many hours of family time our children, Shawna, Missy, and Matt, gave up so I could complete my graduate work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract iii

Doctoral Committee v

Acknowledgments vi

List of Tables x

CHAPTER

1. Introduction 1

Statement of the Problem 7

Significance of the Study 7

Definition of Terms 7

Limitations of the Study 10

Organization of the Study 11

2. Review of Related Literature 12

Infrastructure Concerns 12

Infrastructure and Student Achievement 17

Factors Affecting Successful Bond Campaigns 21

Iowa Studies 55

Holt's Study 62

3. Methodology 65

Review of Related Literature 65

Population and Sample 66

Instrumentation 67

Data Collection 67

Data Analysis 70

4. Findings 72

Research Question One: What variables contributed to the success of bond elections in two selected school districts in Iowa? 73

Research Question Two: What variables contributed to the failure of bond elections in two selected school districts in Iowa? 86

Research Question Three: What relationships exist among The variables with regard to characteristics of the school Districts 100

5. Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations . 115

Summary 115

Conclusions 119

Discussion 125

Recommendations 130

REFERENCES 133

APPENDIXES 138

A. 1997 Code of Iowa Citations 139

B. Exploratory Data Analysis 141

C. Letter to Superintendents 144

D. Interview Scripts 146

E. Letter of Permission to Replicate Study 160

F. Human Subjects Approval 162

G. Selected Direct Participant Quotes 164

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election Successful School District A	74
2.	Advice to Others Preparing for Election Successful School District A	76
3.	Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election Successful School District B	79
4.	Advice to Others Preparing for Election Successful School District B	82
5.	Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election Unsuccessful School District C	87
6.	Advice to Others Preparing for Election Unsuccessful School District C	88
7.	Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election Unsuccessful School District D	94
8.	Advice to Others Preparing for Election Unsuccessful School District D	95
9.	Structured Superintendent's Demographic Data	101
10.	Structured Common Questions	106
11.	Structured Banker Data	109
12.	Structured Newspaper Editor Data	110
13.	Structured Citizen Committee Data	113

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Many schools in every state in the United States are suffering from crumbling infrastructures. Twenty percent of American school buildings are at least fifty years old, and another 43 percent were constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. A survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) indicated that 74 percent of school buildings in the United States needed extensive repairs or replacement. The same survey reported another 12 percent provided inadequate learning environments (Frazier, 1994).

School boards and school administrators are reluctant to propose major building projects due to the difficulty of generating the necessary votes to approve school bond referendums (Frazier, 1994). If school officials are to become successful in achieving passage of typically unpopular bond elections, they must be equipped with a knowledge base that will assist them and their teams to recognize factors that lend themselves to passage of bond elections. Voter approval of bond referendums are more likely to happen when campaign workers are highly organized and have the desire to do what it takes to achieve success (Henry, 1994).

This research was an examination of factors affecting school bond elections in four purposefully selected school districts in Iowa. The study

is a replication of a South Dakota study completed in 1993 at the University of South Dakota (Holt) (see Appendix E).

The researcher applied exploratory data analysis (Tukey, 1971) to information obtained from interviews of persons directly involved in school bond elections in four Iowa school districts. Exploratory data analysis is suitable for this study because the researcher is familiar with the issues of school bond elections and can apply proper techniques to summarize actual data obtained from the interviews. The researcher has been employed in two school districts that held elections for construction and renovation of buildings. In both situations, the researcher worked with bond campaign groups, architects, and bond consultants.

The United States General Accounting Office estimated it would take $112 billion just to bring elementary and secondary schools into what is described as generally good condition. Not included in the price tag is the cost to upgrade schools with modern technology and communication systems. Urban districts tend to suffer the greatest need with an estimated 38 percent in near deplorable condition. Thirty percent of rural schools are in dire need of major renovations, with suburban schools close behind with 29 percent in similar shape (Moseley-Braun, 1997).

Concerns of decaying facilities center on issues of safety and equity. Persons who support new schools often base their beliefs on the physical

condition of the structure and issues of life-safety. However, other issues, such as accessibility, air quality, and security need equal attention. All of these factors have the potential to limit a child's ability to receive an education commensurate with children in modern facilities (Spoor, 1998).

Fire marshals often overlook real safety concerns because they realize the obstacles schools face in making needed improvements. Old piping, electrical, and heating systems encased in thick walls make it difficult for schools to fix environmental hazards, except through large expenditures. Because operating school budgets do not allow sufficient funding for capital projects, a bond issues is the only avenue for generating these funds (Bartusek, 1994).

Frazier (1994) cited two studies in Washington, D.C. and Saginaw, Michigan that provide evidence of a correlation between school building condition and student achievement. The studies concluded that after controlling variables of the study groups, average student scores on standardized tests rose by 5.45 percentage points one year after their school attendance centers were replaced or renovated. The studies estimated student scores will increase by an average 10.9 percentage points over the course of time students attend the improved facility.

Conditions of Iowa school buildings are equally critical. Roos (1997) stated that 25 percent of Iowa school buildings were built with turn of the

twentieth century schooling in mind. Iowa State University consultants estimated needed maintenance and improvements to school facilities would cost Iowa taxpayers nearly $871 million during the 1990s alone (Bartusek, 1994).

Davidson (1994) concluded that the major barrier to replacing old buildings or making major renovations is the 60 percent approval requirement of school bond referendums. Because Iowa law requires a 60 percent majority of votes to approve bond referendums, many school districts are unable to garner the necessary support (see Appendix A).

> Iowa Code (1997) Chapter 75.1. Bonds-election-vote required. When a proposition to authorize an issuance of bonds by a county, township, school corporation, city, or by any local board or commission, is submitted to the electors, such proposition shall not be deemed carried or adopted, anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, unless the vote in favor of such authorization is equal to at least sixty percent of the total vote cast for and against said proposition at said election.

Prior to July 1, 1998, property taxes were the only source of revenue available to Iowa school districts to repay bonds issued for improvement of school facilities. Legislation approved in the 1998 session of the Iowa Legislature allowed counties to approve a one cent sales tax for the purpose of repaying the principal and interest of school bonds. An election is required

in which a majority of voters in the county election need to approve the sales tax increase. Funds generated are distributed to schools in the county on a per pupil basis of students who are residents of the county.

School districts proposing bond elections funded by property taxes are also limited by Chapter 298.18, Code of Iowa (1997), to increase the property tax rate by no more than $2.70 per $1,000 of assessed valuation to repay the principal and interest of the bond. The electorate in a school district can impose a tax rate increase of up to $4.05 per $1,000 of assessed valuation; however, a second question must be added to the ballot to allow the school district to levy beyond the $2.70 barrier. A 60 percent majority approval of both questions would be required for authorization of issuance of bonds (see Appendix A).

Faced with the hindrance created by statute, school officials need to turn to marketing approaches to sell the issue to their community. According to Graham, Wise, and Bachman (1990), achieving the supermajority is not a simple task, rather it involves highly organized strategies that focus on student needs and the value of the project.

On average only 28 percent of households have children in school (Conyers & Francl, 1989); therefore, persons involved in bond campaigns must clearly prove the educational need for improved school facilities. A

bond issue does not just raise taxes, it enhances the quality of life in the community.

Carter (1995) contended the key to successful bond elections lies in respect for voters. Voters expect clarity, consistency, brevity, and sincerity in the information they receive. Bond campaigns that are not completely open seldom earn voter approval (Walker, 1996).

If school buildings are going to be improved and bond issues approved, stakeholders needs to get involved. Rasicot (1998) asserted that school board members must take the lead. The board must have a unanimous vision to which the members are committed. The vision for school facilities is no less important than any other aspect of school functions. The building is the envelope surrounding the educational program.

The researcher reviewed literature related to factors affecting school bond issues as part of this study. That information, along with summarized data received from selected interviews, added to resources already available to school districts contemplating school bond issues. Identified variables related to the success or failure of school bond elections expanded the scope of information.

Statement of the Problem

This study was an investigation of factors that affected the outcome of school bond elections in four purposefully selected school districts in Iowa.

The following questions guided the study:

1. What variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected school districts?

2. What variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school districts?

3. What relationships exist among these variables with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will serve as a resource for school administrators, school board members, and campaign teams who wish to initiate school facility improvements requiring issuance of bonds. Armed with research data regarding the variables that contribute to school bond success, these persons can build a framework for designing a campaign that fits their community. Information gathered in this study can be compared to information gathered in other research studies.

Definition of Terms

In order to provide clarity in this study the following terms are defined. Definitions without citations were developed by the researcher.

Assessed valuation: The total value of taxable property within the school district as determined by the county auditor.

Bond attorney: An attorney hired by the board of education to oversee the procedures for bond preparation and sale of bonds. The bond attorney is the legal advisor to the school board throughout and after a bond campaign.

Bond consultant: A bond consultant assists school districts in the financial preparation for a bond election. The bond consultant develops the structure for: bonding capacity, tax rates, and bond sales.

Bonding capacity: The maximum amount of dollars a district can generate for a bond proposal. In Iowa, a school district's bond capacity is equal to five percent of the district's total property valuation.

Campaign teams: Groups of individuals, not funded by school monies, who work for voter approval of a bond election.

Capital projects: School projects that generally involve significant repairs to or replacement of buildings or sites.

Code of Iowa: Set of statutes governing entities and individuals under the jurisdiction of the State of Iowa.

Exploratory data analysis: A research technique that "tends to study many variables and their relationships in order to further understanding of the phenomena" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 35). (see Appendix B for additional definition).

Inadequate learning environments: Classrooms in which poor physical conditions negatively affect students' ability to receive an appropriate education.

Issuance of bonds: The act of selling bonds to the public to provide funds for capital projects.

Payoff schedule: The schedule for paying off bonded indebtedness. This printed schedule shows the timeline and amounts of the bond payoff.

Physical Plant and Equipment Levy: The Code of Iowa allows school districts to tax themselves in a special levy to make improvements and repairs to their infrastructure.

School bond: A certificate issued by a school district for sale to the public. Bonds are issued in the amount of the principal loan on a capital project. Accrued interest and the principal are paid to the holder of the bond over the life of the bond.

School bond elections: School bond referendums. A process where the electorate is asked whether to approve the issuance of bonds to make major repairs to buildings, construct new buildings, improve sites, or purchase sites.

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major repairs to buildings, construct new buildings, improve sites, or purchase sites.

Side issues: Side issues are incidents or situations that arise during a bond campaign. They generally are not related to the bond proposal, but often distract attention form the central purpose of the bond.

Supermajority: Term used to describe the required 60 percent voter approval of school bond elections in Iowa.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the four school districts purposely selected for the study. The subjects were selected from four purposefully chosen school districts with average K-12 student enrollments of approximately 2,202 students (Dunn, 1997). That average number was chosen to provide for consistency between this study and the study it replicated (Holt, 1993). The four school districts selected for this study had enrollments similar to the national mean school enrollment of 2,823 students (Education Vital Signs, 1995). Selected schools held bond elections between 1994 and 1998, were of approximately the same size, and had election results that met the criteria for participation in the study.

The results of this study may not be generalized beyond the four school districts selected; however, the data may have broad and practical use for school districts contemplating a bond issue and choose to use the data as

part of their strategy. Although the study was restricted to four purposefully selected school districts in the State of Iowa, it was the intent of the researcher to conduct a study that accurately reflected the perceptions of the individuals who responded to the interview questions.

Organization of the Study

The researcher organized the study into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 consists of a review of literature related to variables that affect school bond elections. The methodology for reviewing literature, gathering data, selecting the sample population, and analyzing data are presented in Chapter 3. Presentations of results and analysis of data comprise Chapter 4. A summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, discussion, and recommendations for further study and research is provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

An extended review of selected literature as related to the statement of problem of this study is provided in Chapter 2. The literature included in this chapter was applied to the questions that guided this study: (1) What variables contributed to the success of bond elections? (2) What variables contributed to the failure of the bond elections? (3) What relationships exist among these variables with regard to selected characteristics of school districts? The chapter is divided into five subsections: Infrastructure Concerns, Infrastructure and Student Achievement, Factors Affecting Successful Bond Campaigns, Iowa Studies, Holt's (1993) Study.

The roles of various groups who have a responsibility in structuring and executing a plan for successful bond campaigns is examined in this study. In addition, factors for gaining support from the public are explored in the related research.

Infrastructure Concerns

Most children in the United States spend six hours a day, 180 days a year, over a period of 13 years in public schools. If the future of our nation rests in the hands of these children, how can citizens make sure children have equal access to quality education in terms of: technology, adequate space, access for the mobility impaired, and classrooms that maximize

academic achievement? The related literature examines the seriousness of crumbling infrastructure of school buildings in Iowa and across the United States.

Replacing or making extensive repairs to school buildings is nearly impossible through regular budgets of most school districts (Frazier, 1994). The cost of delayed repairs to schools quadrupled between 1983 and 1993. The price tag for making these repairs has grown to over $100 billion.

With many schools facing budget shortfalls, the only source of funding for infrastructure repair is a successful school bond election. For various reasons successful bond elections are difficult to achieve in most communities. Several studies have been conducted to determine factors associated with successful bond elections.

Across the United States 14 million children attend schools that are termed unsafe (Frazier, 1994). In her study, Linda M. Frazier found that 20 percent of American school buildings are over 50 years old and about 43 percent of buildings were constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. As part of her research, Frazier cited a 1993 national survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators. Seventy-four percent of administrators surveyed stated that they worked in buildings that needed immediate repair or replacement, and another 12 percent of administrators termed their schools inadequate for learning.

Lisa Bartusek (1994) studied the condition of schools in Iowa to determine infrastructure needs of these facilities. Based on her data, Bartusek estimated that Iowa school patrons would need to spend over $871 million between 1993 and 1999 to maintain and improve Iowa's school buildings. In 1992 students in 49 Iowa schools districts were attending classes in school buildings built before 1900. Another 804 schools utilized buildings that had been in use since 1930, and another 2,289 buildings were constructed over 30 years ago.

The Iowa Department of Education (1998) undertook a study that looked, first hand, at the problems of Iowa's school buildings and divided the inadequacies of identified districts into five categories: safety, technology, equity, accessibility, and deficiencies affecting student achievement. Directors of the study recognized that the growing population in many districts was not being met with new construction. Fewer than one-half of schools with increasing student populations planned to hold bond elections. In the course of the study, officials of the Iowa Department of Education realized that nearly fifty percent of Iowa's schools were in violation of state fire and safety codes.

Data from the study showed that even schools built as late at the 1960s were not adequately wired to accommodate modern technology.

Schools of the pre-1970 vintage lacked the adaptation necessary for computer networking that is commonplace in new schools.

Iowa Department of Education researchers concluded that schools built near the turn of the 20th century were not designed to allow separate classrooms for art, music, special education, or media centers. This information raised educators' level of concern for equity of education for children in Iowa, because they were attending schools built during a wide range of construction eras. The problems of many older buildings were compounded by the fact that it is not economically feasible to remodel them due to the cost of replacing outdated heating, plumbing, and electrical systems.

Since 1974 the Iowa Code mandated barrier-free building accessibility for person with disabilities. True accessibility would mean more than elevators for the mobility impaired, but would involve accommodations for doors, drinking fountains, restroom fixtures, and telephones. Signage and alarm systems would need to be configured for persons with visual and hearing impairments. Again, older buildings were found to be very inflexible for doing alterations that meet the needs of persons with handicapping conditions.

Spoor (1998) interviewed school officials from all over the United States to determine the top facility issues that schools will be facing as they

move into the 21st century. In the course of his interviews, he created a list of eight issues that need to be taken into consideration as schools review their facilities and make decisions regarding bond elections. Spoor considered the following as the top eight facility issues that will impact schools in the coming years:

1. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) has been in effect for many years. Any new construction must provide accommodations for persons with impairments.

2. Energy management as a way of reducing operating budgets has generated interest as a major factor in new facility design.

3. Enrollments continue to grow in many school districts around the country.

4. New educational programs require facility adaptation.

5. School districts are struggling to install technology in every classroom.

6. Indoor air quality is becoming a big concern of parents and health care providers.

7. The general deterioration of schools is recognized at the federal level and by every state legislature.

8. Schools need to become proactive in designing facilities that maximize safe environments for children.

Infrastructure and Student Achievement

Frazier (1994) concluded that people are influenced by their environment, thus establishing a link between student achievement and the condition and quality of school buildings. In her study she maintained that an environment of deteriorating walls, nonfunctional restrooms, poor lighting, poor ventilation, and inadequate heating and cooling systems led to low morale of students and staff. These factors affected students' ability to concentrate, thus limiting their potential academic growth. As part of her research, Frazier cited a 1992 study done by Maureen Edwards in the Washington, D.C. school system. In her study, Edwards claimed student achievement on standardized tests could improve from 5.45 to 10.9 percentage points if the condition of school buildings were improved. Similar results were asserted in the Saginaw (Michigan) Schools Project. Officials of the Saginaw Public Schools launched a study of the relationship between student achievement and school facilities involving thirty-one schools. The five-year project revealed improvements in math and reading, which the surveyed participants attributed to corrective action taken regarding the district's school buildings.

Almost every educator would agree there is a connection between condition of school facilities and student achievement (Cash, Earthman, & Hines, 1997). Cash et al. conducted a follow-up review of three studies done

in the states of Virginia and North Dakota. The first study involved forty-seven rural Virginia schools with senior class enrollments of fewer than 100 students. The second study was conducted in eighty-eight urban high schools in Virginia cities with populations of 100,000 or more. The final study involved all of the 199 high schools in North Dakota.

Through their survey of administrators of the selected schools, Cash et al. (1997) compared student achievement scores of students with the reported condition of their schools' facilities. To determine the condition of facilities, Cash et al. used a survey instrument with specific questions about the schools' physical condition. The conditions were measured according to structural items and cosmetic items. With these data in hand, the researchers categorized the school buildings into one of three groups: above-standard, standard, and substandard facilities. Analysis of covariance was used to measure the relationships. Achievement scores were adjusted to minimize any student achievement factors attributable to the students' socioeconomic environment.

Analysis of the results revealed higher student achievement in above-standard and standard school buildings versus substandard buildings in rural Virginia. In analyzing tests scores as related to cosmetic conditions such as, graffiti, paint condition, and floor maintenance, the researchers found students in above-standard schools scored one to two percentage points

higher on the Iowa Tests of Educational Development than did students in standard schools. Students in standard schools scored three to four percentage points higher on the Iowa tests than students in substandard schools. Structural conditions including windows, acoustics, heat, lighting tended to show less differences in achievement between the three categories of schools. Results did not consistently show advantages of any particular category of facility.

In urban Virginia, the overall condition of buildings had a distinct effect on student achievement on standardized, norm referenced tests. Students in above-standard schools scored a full 17 percentage points better in math than did students in substandard schools buildings. The smallest difference in any other subtest of the two categories of schools was nine percentage points. Findings in urban schools revealed results similar to those of rural Virginia schools in that cosmetic conditions influenced differences in test scores to a larger extent than did structural items.

An analysis of the results in North Dakota validated the conclusions of the Virginia studies. Better than average cosmetic conditions meant higher student achievement in the above-standard schools than substandard schools in twelve of the thirteen subtests of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). Again, structural conditions created fewer differences in student achievement, because students in above-standard schools scored

better than substandard schools in only eight of the 13 subtests. However, the range of difference on the eight subtests ran between three and 12 percentage points.

Based on these studies, there is little doubt that building conditions affect performance, especially in consideration of cosmetic conditions. School administrators and boards must include expectations of improved student performance in their plans for building construction (Cash, Earthman, & Hines, 1997).

Davidson (1994) concluded that school boards in Iowa were reluctant to initiate school bond elections for fear they would fail because of the 60 percent of positive vote requirement for passage. He also pointed out the high cost of doing nothing. He gave examples of school districts needing to propose building projects five times or more to voters before a bond issue was approved to fund the projects. In every case cited the cost of the projects grew significantly with each election. Community leaders in the districts felt the community lost something in terms of economic development as a result of delayed construction. It also meant that hundreds of students were denied the opportunity to attend classes in schools with up-to-date technology, accessibility, and improved conditions for safety and health.

School officials concerned with the condition of their schools need research-based data which would assist them in passing school bond issues

for constructing new buildings or effectively remodeling old buildings (Graham, Wise, & Bachman, 1990). The study by Graham et al. revealed strategies for marketing successful bond issues. They purported techniques that focussed on needs, desires, and values of the public. Key to their success was recognizing factors that affect bond elections.

Factors Affecting Successful Bond Campaigns

Although no one campaign strategy works for every school district attempting to approve a school bond election, certain strategies have been identified as components that will increase the odds (National School Public Relations Association, 1981). In their publication, "You Can Win at the Polls," researchers for the National School Public Relations Association shared data they compiled based on case studies of numerous school districts across America who attempted school bond referenda. The researchers considered it imperative for the board and community leaders to: develop a long-range plan and effectively communicate the plan to the public, prepare to use down-to-earth campaigning techniques, know their community, be in a position to address every question with a reasonable answer, realize the dynamics of electioneering, and persevere the toil of a dedicated campaign.

The writing team for the National School Public Relations Association recognized two components as most critical. First, public relations efforts are a function of management. Bond issues were not likely to pass if two-way

internal and external communication was lacking. With information comes pubic understanding and support. Second, learn from the winners. Study the strategies of schools that were successful in their crusades. Carefully review the steps each district took as they analyzed their situation, planned their strategy, implemented their plan of action, and evaluated their success.

The authors of the National School Public Relations Association publication (1981) concurred with the findings of Charles Stanley (1980). Stanley avowed the premise that effective public relations on the part of the superintendent and board played a critical role in passage of bond issues in schools he studied. Successful public relations built trust, confidence, and faith in schools. Citizens who knew and understood the aims and needs of their schools were more likely to support propositions left to the discretion of voters.

To achieve success Stanley (1990) offered four suggestions. His first suggestion was to tune up the district's public relations program providing a free flow of information to the media. Journalists are generally friendly to school causes, especially when they are part of the public relations loop. Second, communicate regularly with the school staff, both orally and in print. Hold forums for staff members who are not part of the direct planning. Write memoranda explaining the details of the plan to date and impending decisions of the board or steering committee. Third, write weekly feature

stories for local media that include summaries of actions taken by the board and steering committee. Develop a question and answer format to allow the community an opportunity to offer their input. The issues in the survey need to be written in understandable terms. Responses to the questions must be readable, devoid of educational jargon and long, drawn out answers. If the board and superintendent are uncomfortable with their ability to design such an instrument, they should consider the assistance of a public relations specialist.

The conclusions of the National School Public Relations Association were validated in the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation (1990) publication, "Successful Strategies for Marketing School Levies" by Graham, Wise, and Bachman. The authors proposed a marketing plan to gain approval for a school bond initiative. Graham et al. (1990) made a distinction between selling and marketing. Selling implies moving a product or service, while marketing involves research, product development, promotion, and follow-up.

Before a board of directors embarks on a bond campaign, they need to analyze their customers well in advance of the proposed election. The market analysis is best conducted eight months to a year before an election is held. Most schools do their analysis through a survey instrument designed specifically for their district. Graham et al. (1990) suggested the survey be

brief and succinct, asking questions that provide respondents multiple choice answers. They also recommended the survey be distributed by a group of volunteers rather than by school officials. To increase the number of returned surveys, Graham et al. (1990) recommended publicizing the survey in all local media a week or two ahead of its actual distribution. If the survey is to be conducted door to door by volunteers, the volunteers need to be thoroughly trained in strategies for carrying out an effective survey process that will generate accurate and useful information.

As soon as public attitude has been measured and analyzed, the bond committee and school board members need to review options for providing the building plan and promotion strategy that best match community attitudes as determined from the survey. Again, it is imperative that the community knows the results of the survey. Citizens are more likely to support the bond issue if it is made clear to them their opinion drove the plan for the building project.

With the community data in hand and a building plan on the table, it is now time to develop the strategy for campaigning for passage of the bond proposal. A major shortcoming of many campaigns is failure to spend an adequate amount of time for planning. It is common to spend six months or more planning the strategies for a campaign that will take place two to three weeks just prior to the election.

The paramount duty of the committee for passing the bond issue is to identify "yes" voters and make sure they vote. Targeting positive votes means carefully assessing the community to determine how many people would vote "yes" and why. Certain groups of people can generally be recognized as potential "yes" votes and worth approaching for their support. A large number of households are made up of persons who are renters; therefore, they do not pay property taxes. This group of voters could make the difference in a close election. Another potential voting block includes high school students of voting age, college students, and recent graduates serving in the military. Using current high school students to contact their peers is an effective way to encourage targeted persons to vote. Generally, persons who have graduated from high school within five years will be supportive of school initiatives. It would be worth the time of the campaign committee to study voter lists from past elections in an attempt to identify persons who tend to vote "yes" for referenda.

After the list of potential positive voters has been compiled, these persons need to be tracked and reminded to vote on election day. A phone call a day ahead of the election would serve as a reminder that their positive vote is needed. On the day of the election, campaign volunteers could assume the role of precinct workers by checking off the names of identified "yes" votes. If persons from the list have not voted by late afternoon, they

would be called by committee workers and reminded of the importance of their vote. Committee workers could provide transportation or babysitting services to assist those who have not reached the polls (Graham et al., 1990).

Various groups in the school community play special parts in a bond campaign. The role of the board is to initiate the process by making the decision to move forward with a building project based on district needs. Board members must be familiar with applicable laws regarding their participation in the actual campaign process. The chances of approval of a bond levy are much greater when the board is unanimous on the project and ballot question. The board needs to recognize that this is an issue of the people; therefore, it should allow the community to take charge of the campaign process. Board members should be publicly supportive of the work of the committee and highly visible in their role as proponents of the issue (Armstrong, 1994).

The superintendent serves as the predominant advisor to the board and the campaign committee. Initially, the superintendent conducts the necessary research for board members, so they can make informed decisions in regard to the building proposal and ballot question. The preliminary work would include gathering data about property tax assessments, tax rates, building costs, community demographics, student data, academic goals, plus

many other related matters. The superintendent needs to maintain a profile that would not give voters the impression that the proposal is the "superintendent's plan." However, the superintendent should expect to play an active, behind the scenes role with the committee as an advisor regarding educational issues (Graham et al., 1990).

The administrative team has the responsibility for compiling student data and forwarding these to the superintendent and board. Some members of the administrative team, especially principals of affected buildings, should be represented on the planning and campaigning committees. Regardless of their assignment, all members of the administrative team should stay abreast of the progress of the planning and campaigning teams, since they will likely be subjected to questions from their respective staffs and members of the community (Graham et al., 1990).

Community constituents often question teachers and members of the classified staff regarding school issues. Therefore, it is important that information related to the bond issue is always shared with all school employees. Representation by the staff unions is important for their input, plus it may bolster the chances of gaining a bloc of support from the membership. School employees serve as valuable resources in the planning stages and for providing testimonials; however, school employees must never use school time or campaign with students during classes (Koontz, 1980).

An often ignored, but potentially effective group of promoters, are students (Graham et al., 1990). Using students requires careful handling to prevent a side issue of exploiting children to promote the bond. Students' comments can be included in promotion literature, or older students may volunteer to write letters to the editor and in their school publications. Many students have the skills to write poignant letters from their perspective that are very persuasive.

The board and committee should consider involving the architect in the campaign process. Architects have the expertise to explain building design and legal requirements that go along with a particular proposal. They can also describe details of construction that likely is unfamiliar territory for most board members, administrators, or committee members. Architects can also discuss costs and comparisons of construction options (Armstrong, 1994).

Henry (1994) stressed community involvement and honest communication as integral components of a prevailing bond election. Referenda had a much better chance of being approved when a district has a strong public relations program in place long before the election is held. A bond vote reflects community values; therefore, the values of the community need to be identified early in the campaign process through a careful study of the thoughts and concerns of citizens. Henry determined through her work with the South Carolina School Board Association that superintendents and

boards needed to take the task of referenda seriously by conducting a survey of the community. As soon as community attitude was measured, the superintendent and board members needed to serve as leaders in the development of a campaign utilizing citizen involvement and granting community ownership of the plan.

Based on her studies, Henry (1994) asserted that the community survey is critical, because each community is unique in terms of its beliefs and needs. Before the school board developed a ballot question, citizens deserve a thorough explanation of the proposal and how it benefits their community. They have to be involved in the design from the initial stages to final development. The community needed to know exactly the cost in terms of taxes. Citizens need a clear explanation, in straightforward language, regarding the affect of increased taxes on various groups of property owners.

Henry (1994) stated that critical to passage of any proposal is unanimous support by board members. Board members, at least publicly, needed to be in agreement with every detail of a bond proposal that is put before voters. Any sign of a crack in board unanimity of the plan would give the opposition the ammunition it needs cast doubt on the proposal.

Walker (1996), president of Walker Communications, an integrated marketing and communications firm, conducted studies of factors that contributed to bond election failures. Through her extensive work with school

districts, Walker (1996) developed a list of reasons why school referenda failed. The studies revealed ten classic reasons for referenda failure: (1) board not adequately prepared; (2) no citizen committee; (3) limited alternatives considered; (4) board divided on the issue; (5) no research conducted; (6) relying on old or unreliable data; (7) minimal volunteer, parent, and staff support; (8) no spokesperson(s) identified/trained; (9) poor media relations; and (10) little or no public awareness and interest.

Walker (1996) cited particular components of successful bond elections. Because education involves two precious commodities, children and tax dollars, it is imperative for schools to establish an effective game plan to achieve a successful bond referendum. Paramount to success is good communication to all segments of the community. In order to communicate effectively to the public, the bond committee needs to know the customer, be able to present the plan using an accurate knowledge base, and pay attention to what is going on in the community. The marketing plan must incorporate the aforementioned components.

Obtaining raw data regarding public opinion is not sufficient for making strategy decisions. It would be wise for a promotion committee to employ an independent consultant, experienced in research analysis, to review the information and assist with the marketing plan.

Teamwork means maximizing the use of volunteers and school staff members. To have an effective team requires significant training of volunteers so they are knowledgeable of the project, understand their role on the team, and have a sense of ownership in the plan and process.

In his research, Barney (1994) stressed the importance of using a citizen committee in the campaign process. Not only was it important to use a citizen committee, it was also imperative for the chair to be dynamic and capable of holding up under the stress of the process. Just as Henry (1994) concluded the importance of board unanimity, Barney felt it equally important for the committee to be unanimous in its decisions. The main objective of the committee is to garner the necessary "yes" votes to carry the proposition.

Carter (1995), consultant for organization enhancement and leadership development, outlined strategies that will almost always lead to defeat of a school bond issue. Carter (1995) asserted that campaign committees are misguided in their thinking, if they assume parents will support most any proposal. The reality is that many parents will not support a bond issue unless they clearly see how it benefits children.

A pork barrel approach might seem like a good strategy, because it provides something for everyone. Carter (1995) maintained that many a bond issue failed because the public saw it as a "let's try to please everybody"

approach, rather than dealing with improving the quality of education for children.

Many well-meaning supporters believe the key to passing a bond issue is sharing as much information as possible. They do this by turning out long lists of information, outlining every detail of the plan. Conyers and Francl (1989) held the same belief as Carter (1995) by suggesting the use of brief, clear written flyers with graphics that appeal to voters more than extensive detail. Generally speaking, citizens are most interested in the big picture than every detail. A related benefit of a shortened list is the fact that it gives "nay sayers" fewer things from which to draw side issues.

Board members and bond promoters want to be responsive to suggestions offered by the public. Although people need to be heard, Carter (1995) recommended to boards to stick to their plans and not be swayed by every suggestion raised in a public meeting. Chances are there supporters and opponents of most pieces of the plan. If the plan was well conceived, promoters should spend time explaining the rationale for the plan, versus attempting to appease those who disagree with details.

Carter (1995) suggested that the campaign be customer focused. Voters must be shown there is a value in voting for the plan. Avoid scare tactics and emphasize the gains students and the community can expect, if they support this issue. Customer focus is tantamount to voter respect.

Greig (1990) held views similar to Carter. While he served as superintendent of the Lunenberg (Virginia) County schools, district voters approved a bond issue for constructing two new elementary schools by a 79.4 percent margin. Greig ascertained particular elements of the bond campaign that proved to be integral to its success.

Key to passage was the process of voter identification and efforts to garner positive votes from recognized groups. The community expected support from the black population, because the black clergy voiced public support for the issue. Middle class population generally supported school issues from economic and social perspectives. A straw poll of parents revealed 85-90 percent support for the project. Only two groups sent mixed signals about their interest in backing the proposal: large land owners and retired citizens.

Armed with these data, the board put in place a plan of action with five precepts. A grassroots committee called Citizens for New Schools would facilitate the campaign. The groups organized themselves well ahead of the election and used data as the driving force for development of their campaign strategies.

Always, the emphasis of the project was true needs of students. Rationale for the plan was outlined in educational terms, not just in dollars

and cents. However, cost savings and economic benefits were significant ingredients of the detailed plan.

Bond campaign workers were trained with an orientation toward the future. When meeting with their publics, they stressed how the design was conceived, keeping in mind the needs of students for the next three generations. The use of futuristic terms added value to the plan, which, in turn, improved chances of passage, because the plan was forward thinking, rather than a comparison to the past.

The board realized the superintendent would need to make a significant personal sacrifice to provide the leadership and direction necessary for effective committee work. In addition, the superintendent would need to assert leadership in the face of obstacles with an unshakable spirit of "students first" (Greig, 1990).

The National School Public Relations Association (1981) concurred with Greig (1990) that even though every initiative has its opponents, supporters of the project must maintain the moral high ground. Persons working on the campaign were trained to avoid sparing with opponents or becoming defensive when confronted by persons with conflicting points of view. Instead bond workers stuck to the issues of the needs for a safe environment and the value of modern schools to students and the community

Conyers and Francl (1989) shared the opinion of Graham et al. (1990) regarding marketing a bond issue versus selling it. Conyers and Francl were superintendent and board president, respectively, of the Community Consolidated School District 15, Palatine, Illinois at the time district voters approved a $64 million bond issue.

A 30-day campaign was directed by a citizen committee, much the same as most other districts, using the same strategies as outlined by Graham et al. (1990) with a few exceptions. The working committee decided to keep the issue simple and limit the essence of the project to one key message. Committee members determined the bond issue would be simpler to market, if voters recognized it as a single idea. The committee stressed the project as a community effort to improve education, the quality of the workforce, and the future of Palatine. The board wanted to convey the idea that the vote was an investment in the future and limited detailing the project as strictly a school initiative. This proved to be an effective strategy that seemed to appeal to the 28 percent of community households that did not have residents with children currently in school. Campaign workers believed that district patrons, who did not have children in school, needed to see a benefit for the community before they could support the issue.

The Palatine, Illinois group adopted a new twist in the medium used to promote the project in their community. They discarded the idea of full-page

newspaper advertisements and television commercials. Board members were concerned that expensive advertising would send the wrong message to voters. In order to abide by the board conditions, the campaign committee chose a small-scale, but intensive advertising operation. The group used direct mail and series of meetings with civic and business groups, parent organizations, and groups of community leaders. In these forums, the committee distributed a brief fact sheet with a section devoted to questions and answers. The superintendent appeared at meetings to share the district's financial information and offer details of district goals. News media were invited to every meeting to allow them an opportunity to hear information, first hand, and to ask questions (Conyers & Francl, 1989).

Horicon (Wisconsin) School District board president, Duane Lindstrom (1994), attributed their district's successful bond issue to a homemade videotape that showed the needs of the district. Although the district employed the usual practices of a steering committee, public meetings, advertising, etc., Lindstrom believed the videotape pushed the vote over the edge; generating extra votes needed for passage.

At first promoters thought of using a professionally developed video with clips of experts speaking to details of the problems of current buildings and providing options for solutions to the problems. The idea was abandoned giving way to the thought of an amateur video that would show the problems

rather than have experts explaining them. Instead of talking about buckling floors or overcrowded classrooms, the video featured actual clips of these conditions. The committee selected graphic shots of the central problems. Still shots of front-page stories from the local media accompanied the script.

Included in the footage were segments of numerous board meetings in which board members discussed options for correcting building deficiencies. The strategy proved that the board was careful in its review of options, and the community could easily see the proposal was deliberated well in advance of the vote (Lindstrom, 1994).

In order to get the video in front of as many people as possible, the committee used the video to start every public meeting regarding the referendum. As the election day approached, it was aired on the local cable station, with newspapers reporting dates and times for the airings in advance. Placing copies of the video in the public library was a surprisingly effective method of distribution to the public. The videos were so frequently checked out that library workers needed to establish a waiting list for those wishing to view the video.

Although Lindstrom (1994) admitted it was difficult to assess the precise impact of the video on election results, he reported dozens of people commenting, after the election, that it weighed heavily in their decisions to vote in favor of the referendum. Later voters in Horicon were asked to

approve a levy to construct a new swimming pool. Community members insisted that city officials develop a video similar to the one created by the school district.

Dorweiler and Bittle (1992) advised district officials to make use of professionals as they plan and develop campaigns for bond issues. Early in the process districts should contract with an architectural firm. Many architectural firms employee persons trained in public relations, who can assist in campaign strategies. In addition to employing an architect, school boards should also seek the advice of a professional bond consultant. A critical factor for any bond proposal is the impact on taxes. The bond consultant provides invaluable financial data, thus supplying bond promoters with accurate information about taxes, interest rates, bonding capacity, and payoff schedules. Architectural support services coupled with financial data leads to practical decisions regarding the type of building the district can afford. Dorweiler and Bittle strongly suggested that boards hire a bond attorney to assist throughout the entire process. Districts should not risk legal errors that could jeopardize the chances of a successful vote. Districts that work closely with these professionals can expect a better chance of passage of the bond issue and enjoy the peace of mind associated with accurate information and ethical practices.

Free lance writer Fickes (1998) studied how districts encouraged voters, who did have children in school, to support a school bond issue. In most districts the number of households without children outnumber those that do. Fickes suggested that districts participate in a growing trend, which involves forming partnerships with their communities to expand the use of school buildings for community use. In many districts the community-use idea has made approving bond questions easier.

In 1992, Jefferson County, Colorado voters passed a bond issue for a new high school. The board allowed a group of citizens called the Design Advisory Group (DAG) to participate in the planning of the building. Members of the DAG served as a liaison with the community as they applied community-use into the site, floor plan, and interior design. Many promoters of the bond contended this was a major contributing factor to voter approval of the bond (Fickes, 1998).

In the early nineties, the Akron (Ohio) Public Schools were successful in passing a $20 million bond issue (Grier, 1994). After several failed attempts to pass a bond levy, the campaign committee hit upon the idea of using a speakers bureau as a means for communicating, to the public, the needs of the schools. For this to be effective they thought the speakers should be voters from their own community, rather than professional architects or public relations specialists. The committee was sure they could

find several community leaders who were quality speakers and would be willing to serve on the speakers bureau. However, they determined the idea of a speakers bureau could only be successful if the speakers represented a good cross section of the community. With this in mind the group took on the ominous task of recruiting speakers who could represent parents, senior citizens, the business community, and education. In addition to finding and recruiting speakers, the committee realized they needed to provide intensive inservice to bring these people up to speed regarding school programs and the physical needs of the school system (Grier, 1994).

After speakers were selected and briefed on the issues of the proposed bond issue, they were trained to become effective speakers. The selected speakers were brought together in a training session to go over presentation skills and tactics for promoting key points recommended by the committee. Included in the session were skills for offering a cheerful message and effective use of positive body language to support the spoken message. The speakers learned to be adept at familiarizing themselves with the setting and audience ahead of the speaking engagement, keeping to the point and message, using charts, and managing time. After each engagement, selected audience members were asked to evaluate the speaker based on the components of the speaker's training. Feedback from

the evaluation provided valuable information to the speaker for improvements to the presentation (Grier, 1994).

These amateur speakers became skilled as persuasive presenters, who maintained poise in all kinds of meetings. Superintendent Grier (1994), believed this was the winning strategy of the Akron campaign. He suggested to other districts to consider using ordinary folks to act as convincing advocates for schools on any issue.

In her work with the South Carolina School Board Association, Jeannie M. Henry (1987) compiled statistics regarding school bond referenda in the State of South Carolina. She studied forty-two South Carolina school bond elections conducted between 1973 and 1986. Of the forty-two campaigns, twenty-eight were successful and fourteen failed. Smaller school districts tended to fare better in bond attempts than did large schools. The average cost of the successful bonds was $6.9 million, whereas the average asking of the unsuccessful attempts was $20.3 million.

Henry (1987) continued her study by examining the strategies of the identified bond campaigns to see if she could locate common attributes of winners and those of that were unsuccessful. The results of her survey revealed that 84 percent of successful bond campaigns used a strategy of identifying "yes" votes and getting those voters to the polls. According to her findings it would be important for schools planning bond elections to

recognize the significance of a large voter turnout. In the twenty-eight schools that successfully approved bond proposals, 44.3 percent of voters turned out to vote. On the other hand, on average, only 35.8 percent of voters showed up at the polls in the fourteen unsuccessful bond elections. Following her study, Henry recommended that bond campaign committees and school boards address side issues quickly and directly. She based this recommendation on the data from her study that brought to light figures that demonstrated the power of side issues. Seventy-seven percent of successful districts had no side issues with which they had to contend. Of the unsuccessful districts, 70 percent were dealing with side issues.

Based on the results of her study, Henry (1987) offered some observations. She believed that bond campaigns should operate like political campaigns, which means a good deal of time needs to be spent in voter identification. It is usually not possible to change the minds of many opponents; therefore, supporters and undecided voters must be targeted. Utilize as many members of the community, representing a good cross section, as possible in the campaign efforts. Be open and positive in everything. Do not become defensive about side issues; rather maintain a position of importance of the bond and how it benefits children and the community.

When the public must approve an action of a school district it is better to have an engaged public rather than a persuaded public (Kreiner, O'Callaghan, Jr., & Moore, 1995). Kreiner et al. conducted a follow-up study of a bond issue that was approved in the Olmsted Falls (Ohio) City School District in 1994. Emotions were running high in the school district at the time the district announced its intent to build a new middle school. Conditions seemed unlikely for passing this bond issue, because many citizens disagreed with the plan, school taxes were increasing, at the same time the city raised utility rates, and a group of senior citizens organized an anti-tax group.

School officials were determined to take the issue to the public. The successful election indicated a major shift in citizens' attitude in the 18-month campaign that took place between announcement of the project and election day. Kreiner et al. (1995) attributed their success because they engaged the public on a person-to-person basis. The district employed many of the same strategies that most schools use to promote a bond issues such as; eliminating diversions, including the school staff, using a promotion committee, and targeting supporters. However, they used one strategy that was unique to this district. Throughout the summer before the November election, school board members and the superintendent went door to door to talk to persons in every household in the district. The purpose of the effort

was not just to promote the project, but also to listen to what patrons had to say. Word got out that school leaders really believed in their project and cared enough about voters to speak to them personally and listen to their thoughts. Kreiner et al. believed this strategy not only helped them pass their bond issue, but also created a higher level of trust between school and community.

The old union adage, "Politics is the answer to every question you ask," is applicable to bond issues for construction of new schools (Zakariya, 1988). School construction is more than an issue of bricks and mortar – it is probably the biggest political challenge any school board will face. First of all, a bond issue is a major expenditure and politics have always been associated with money. Zakariya's (1998) research listed the kinds of political issues school district can expect such as; the choice of site, bidding work for the project, emotional attachment to old facilities, attendance boundaries, and taxes.

Zakariya (1988) pointed out an unusual political skirmish that took place during the mid-eighties in the Savannah-Chatham (Georgia) County schools. The board's decision to hire an out-of-town construction manager, rather than hiring a local, black-owned Savannah company touched off racial tensions, assuring little support for the bond issue from the 40 percent black population in the school district. This incident helped the board develop a

plan for multiple contracts, thus allowing many local businesses to participate in the planning and construction phases. Zakariya (1988) cited related incidents in other communities. By paying attention to local politics, boards have a better chance of gaining support from nonparent groups, businesses, and community leaders.

A major reason for failure of school bond issues is lack of effective strategies on the part of the school board to get to know their publics. A firm knowledge base of the community is imperative to planning for a bond issue (Zakariya, 1988). School boards need to employee communication strategies including facts regarding taxes and the effect they have on property owners. In addition, bond promoters with a strategic plan for garnering support from various groups within the community will realize greater chances of voter support (Walker, 1996). In particular, school boards or bond promotion committiees should use the power of women voters to the largest extent possible. Women are more likely to support school bond issues than men. Women hold education as a priority as they look for ways to expand their own education and vocational options. In addition women tend to be more organized and determined in their work on bond campaign committees (Fisher, 1978).

Lutz (1980) determined that districts wanting to pass school bond issues needed to adopt sophisticated political techniques. It is not necessary

to subscribe to low profile or hard sell techniques for effectively marketing new construction projects. A theory called crosspressure purports that most voters are predisposed to vote one way or another on the issue. Lutz' (1980) theory suggested that boards work to get the predisposed "yes" voters to the polls, and encourage predisposed "no" voters to not vote at all. To achieve crosspressure promoters stress the positives of the proposal and remain focussed on those issues.

In his study Lutz (1990) used bond campaigns of four school districts in Ohio as examples of crosspressure. Well ahead of the elections, the school boards created support campaign committees. The first assignment of these groups was development of lists of voters and their assumed predisposition on the issue. The list should be analyzed to determine the number of "yes" votes needed to assure successful passage. Next they zeroed in on two blocs of voters; parents of public school children, who were determined to be predominantly predisposed affirmative voters and parents of nonpublic children, who were assumed to be largely negative voters. The people on the lists were called to get their views of the proposal. Armed with survey information, campaign committees developed strategies for conducting the campaign. The driving force for the process was appeasement of positive voters and a platform that had values "no" voters appreciated. The strategy worked as the turnout for assumed "yes" votes ran high, whereas many

predisposed negative voters found themselves in a quandary over the issue and decided not to vote.

Puzey (1986), a school board member from Illinois described a four-prong approach her district employed to successfully achieve voter approval of a bond issue. The four factors, which helped the pro-referendum committee, were (1) use of the media, (2) timing, (3) determination not to be reactionary, and (4) unity of the board.

Puzey (1986) suggested making the most use of the media by not putting the committee or board in an open forum situation that allowed the opposition a free reign to publicly berate the board. This can be accomplished in one of two ways. First, any public meetings could be arranged where members of the audience would submit questions to the board in written form. That way the person wishing to ask a question or make a statement could not speak at-will about issues that may not be founded or germane to the purpose of the public meeting. A second strategy is to be sure that a contingency of pro-referendum persons attends every meeting in which the media is present. This ensures a counter message is offered each time in response to an anti-referendum speaker.

Mailings from the pro-referendum group were specifically timed. Opponents of the issue flooded newspapers with editorials. The pro-referendum committee ignored the information from the opposition until just

before the election, at which time they sent flyers to every household explaining the project and dispelling the claims of the opposition. Puzey (1986) believed have the last word is more effective than primacy.

The pro-referendum committee remained poised throughout the campaign. They realized that the opposition would become nasty and even vicious in their attacks on the plan and the people who presented the plan. Committee members reiterated the fact that they were responsible to the public, and everything they said and did needed to be accurate and truthful. In addition, the committee maintained an attitude of politeness at all times, especially in dealing with opponents.

The precept was maintained that the board must be united from start to finish of the campaign. Anti-referendum groups became frustrated with failed attempts to break the cohesiveness of the board. Not one board member yielded on any issue of the plan. The attempts of the opposition to divide the board became obvious, and created a credibility problem for the opposition in the eyes of the community (Puzey, 1986). Lack of board unity is the major reason for failure of bond elections (Walker, 1996).

The first order of the board after an election is to mend fences. Win or lose the board needs to maintain the high ground. If the measure passes, there should be no celebration, only a statement of thanks to workers and supporters and promise to carry on with decisions and actions for the benefit

of children (Puzey, 1986). After the election it is appropriate for the bond promotion committee to privately celebrate their work, not their victory. However, the committee should publicly recognize the key participants in the campaign efforts, plus emphasize the goals of the campaign (National School Public Relations Association, 1981).

In his journal article, "Fairfax County Loves Its Schools," George F. Hamel (1984) described strategies employed by the Fairfax (Virginia) County schools to encourage voters to approve a $57.1 million bond issue, with over 60% voter approval. Hamel explained situations in Fairfax County as not favorable for passage of a bond issue. Voters had just approved referenda questions for highway improvements and a new correctional facility costing more than $100 million. The economy was slipping and voters were concerned about higher taxes. The PTA organization, which had been active in previous successful campaigns, was going through a reorganization process and would not be available to assist. In recent years, seven buildings in the district had been closed due to shifting populations. The school district used many strategies typical of other bond crusades; however, they ascribed their success to a few key approaches.

The development of committee structure included a deliberate method selecting the chairs for the bond promotion committee. The board decided to use co-chairs to oversee the work of the committee – one available for

evening activities and one who could be available during the day. The person selected for evening work was a highly regarded businessman, community leader, and long-time PTA activist. Hoping to utilize someone who would have appeal to another segment of the community the board appointed a housewife to coordinate daytime activities. The deliberate selections accommodated a three-fold plan: (1) gender did not become an issue in chair selection; (2) there would always be a chairperson available; and (3) each chair represented a distinct population of the community. The promotion committee was convinced that the image of their chairs was a significant factor in the success of their election. In addition to image, they believed that the chairs needed to have skills in leadership and the ability to organize the variety of activities that accompany a school bond campaign (Hamel, 1984).

In the large majority of bond promotion processes, committees and boards utilized a poll of some sort to determine the issues and to get an idea of the attitude voters had toward the plan. Fiedler (1996) described a different approach put to use in the 1996, $36 million bond for school construction in the Park City (Utah) School District. In the latter stages of the planning, the promotion committee opted not to conduct a poll to measure support for the bond. Members of the committee decided a poll would only hurt their chances, because people become irritated when they receive pesky phone calls or knocks on their doors. Instead the committee detailed a plan

for promoting the issue with the focus on the merits of the plan rather than spending time analyzing the population.

Raj K. Chopra (1988), superintendent of schools, Shawnee Mission (Kansas) School District suggested an approach that allows the community to make its own decision about the need for building construction. Ahead of the election, Superintendent Chopra prepared a document describing the district's deteriorating financial condition and concerns within the district regarding staff and course offerings. The report went on to describe a shifting population and the process the board had followed to close schools in areas of the district suffering sever population decline. The shortage of schools in particular sections of the city where population was increasing was pointed out in the report.

Chopra (1989) offered no suggestions, but the media thoroughly publicized the report through widespread coverage and editors' reviews. The board allowed the report to trickle through the community for a few months until a group of community leaders joined the board to garner support from civic and business groups to promote a bond issue for new schools. From this point, a committee took over the promotion of the bond; however, it was made clear throughout the process that the community founded the urgency for the plan rather than school district officials.

To promote their major initiatives, school districts should utilize their influential alumni to carry the message. Johnathan W. Koontz (1980) was the director of information services for the Palm Beach (California) Community College during the late seventies, when the college successfully achieved voter approval for construction of new campus facilities. College officials, who led the development of strategies for the campaign, used every possible resource available to them. Personal contacts proved to be the most effective medium for marketing the need to voters. They first struck on the idea of using their alumni when the college president contacted noted alumnus, Burt Reynolds, to tape a 30-second spot for local television. The strategy proved so effective, college officials made use of other alumni and the college staff, professional and classified, to take their message to the streets. That was exactly what they did by dressing in campaign T-shirts and carrying signs along freeways. Staff and alumni immersed the newspapers with editorials and did spots on local radio.

The strategy had many happy by-products. Because so much attention had been directed at the college, it enhanced the image of the college within the community. Morale among college employees soared as they worked together for a common cause (Koontz, 1980).

Armstrong (1994) served on the board of directors of the Wapello (Iowa) Community School District. The Wapello School District experienced a

successful bond issue that was attributed to clear decisions the district made in developing the building project. The campaign was based on the premise that voters would approve the measure, if they knew the plan was well conceived. The board incorporated three components into their project plan before it is turned over to a campaign promotion committee: (1) create a project development team, (2) produce a project scope, and (3) hire an architect.

The project team should include members of the school board, administration, staff, and the general public. Size and make-up of the project team is left to the discretion of the board. The objective of team member selection is finding persons who are willing to commit time and effort for this project, with improvement of education as the driving force. The superintendent serves as the liaison for the project. All public information releases and reports are made through the superintendent. The building principal is responsible for providing input specific to the children who will be served by the project. The school faculty helps detail the project by offering input in terms of room design and curriculum functions. Imperative to a successful bond election is input received from the members of the committee who represent the general public. These members bring with them perceptions and attitudes that will serve well in the development of a "community plan". At least one member of the board should attend

committee meetings to keep the board apprised of the progress of the project team (Armstrong, 1994).

Before the architect is retained, the project team should study district needs and brainstorms a basic plan for meeting the identified needs. The project team should explore options such as; how many rooms are needed and how they will function, size and location of rooms, cabinetry, storage, site selection and site preparation, necessary permits, and location of utilities. Each month the project team should provide progress reports to the school board. This keeps the board up-to-date, plus allows the public the opportunity to hear and respond to details of the plan.

Hiring the architect is the first step in determining the expected cost of the project. It is important for the board to hire an architect who matches the interest and desires of the board. If school board members want to enhance the chances of hiring the architect that would best serve their district; they need to do prepare a list of qualities they would like to see in their architect. The board should compile a list of several architectural firms. Most architectural firms have a portfolio that will assist the district in reducing the list of firms down to three to five that board members will interview (Graham et al., 1990).

In the Wapello bond project (Armstrong, 1994), each architect scheduled for an interview received , in advance, a copy of the project scope

prepared by the project team. The board developed a list of standard questions that were posed to each architect interviewed. A specified amount of time was granted to each firm interviewed, making it consistent for every firm. Part of the time was set aside for the architects to provide their pitch. Each architect was asked to provide an estimate of the cost of the proposed project and an estimate of the cost of their services (Armstrong, 1994).

Iowa Studies

Many Iowa school districts facing the challenge of making needed improvements to their school buildings turned to the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASAB) for assistance (Davidson, 1994). The board of directors and administrators of IASB were strong advocates for changing Iowa law regarding the 60 percent supermajority and finding ways to fund school bond issues with resources other than local property taxes. The Iowa Legislature had been reluctant to change any laws in regard to school bond issues on the premise that their constituents strongly favor the supermajority, and as part of local control, bond repayment should be paid only with individual community funds, not with state monies.

Realizing it was unlikely that changes in Iowa law regarding bond approval margins and funding sources would take place, the leaders of IASB decided to study the factors that affected school bond elections in Iowa and provide their findings to local districts, hoping the information would help

districts pass referendums. The board of directors of IASB contracted with the financial consulting firm of Dain Bosworth to study bond issue election success rates in Iowa and report their findings to school districts as part of the 1996 Fiscal Management Conference sponsored by IASB. The Dain Bosworth study dealt mostly with financial issues of selected Iowa school districts (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

In their research consultants from Dain Bosworth (1996) studied every one of the 125 Iowa school districts that held bond elections in the time span of 1990 through 1995. Fifty-one of the 125 school districts were successful in passing a bond issue in that time period. Of the fifty-one successful bond elections, 19 were approved in the first attempt.

Consultants for Dain Bosworth interviewed the superintendents from the 125 schools that held bond elections to determine factors that might contribute to successful passage of school bond elections. Superintendents were asked if citizens in their school typically supported tax increases for capital spending projects. Sixty-eight percent of respondents indicated that voters in their district tended to support such tax increases for programs such as the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy. When superintendents were asked if they believed their citizens understood the mechanisms by which Iowa public schools are financed, only 17 percent of superintendents believed their constituents understood. Superintendents from the selected group were

asked if citizens understood how their local schools were financed. Only twenty-five percent of superintendents felt that their patrons understood the local finance formula. Superintendents were asked if negative remarks were often stated in their community about public education as related to the way their district managed its resources. Twenty-one percent of superintendents felt their citizens often expressed negative opinions about the way their school board conducted its financial operations. A related question posed to superintendents was how do you believe citizens in your district would respond to the question; "My school districts spends money wisely"? Seventy-eight percent of superintendents believed the consensus of their district would support the way the board and administration manage school finances (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

Dain Bosworth (1996) consultants expanded the study to determine if particular types of demographic conditions were factors in bond election success rates. Five factors were applied to the Iowa districts that approved bond issues in the time period of 1990 through 1995. The researchers reviewed the following factors: percent of households with children, percent of adults with college degrees, median household income, district valuation per pupil, median home value to median income. The districts included in the study were divided in four quartiles for each of the factors listed.

Researchers attempted to see if there was a connection between the percent of households with children and success rate for bond issues. The first quartile representing the 25 percent of school districts with the highest percentage of households with children had a bond success rate of 36.8 percent. The second quartile had a success rate of 51.9 percent; the third quartile success rate was 34.5 percent; and the fourth quartile had a success rate of 41.5 percent. Based on these data, the researchers determined that the percent of households with children might not be a factor in bond success rates (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

Next consultants of Dain Bosworth attempted to see if the education level of citizens in a community is a factor in bond success. In communities with the highest quartile of percent of adults with a college degree, researchers found the success rate to be 45.0 percent. Districts making up the second quartile had a 45.5 percent success rate; districts in the third quartile had a 31.5 percent success rate; and the fourth quartile districts had a success rate of 40.0 percent. These data did offer some support for the notion that the level of education of citizens of a community can influence the rate of success of a bond issue. Based data presented, communities with a higher percentage of college graduates may enjoy a slightly higher potential for passing bond issues (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

The third factor reviewed by Dain Bosworth consultants was the effects of median household income on rate of success of school bond elections. Communities represented by the upper quartile of median household income had a bond success rate of 43.8 percent. Communities represented in the second quartile had a success rate of 42.1 percent; the rate of success for the third quartile was 33.9 percent; and the success rate for the fourth quartile was 45.8 percent. The researchers determined, from these findings, that median household income was considered insignificant as a factor in bond election success (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

The issue of property tax rates versus property valuation has a tendency to become a sticky wicket in communities attempting to approve a bond issue. Many times patrons look only at property tax rates, without taking valuation into consideration. In districts with high per pupil valuation, tax rates are generally lower, with the reverse being true for districts with low valuation. Consultants in the Dain Bosworth study tried to determine if per pupil valuation was a factor in the success rate for passing school bond elections. The districts in the highest quartile of per pupil valuation had a bond success rate of 47.3 percent. The second quartile had a success rate of 34.8 percent; the third quartile had a 41.8 percent success rate; and districts with the lowest per pupil valuation, representing the fourth quartile, had a success rate of 40.0 percent. Researchers determined from these findings that districts with

the highest per pupil valuation may have a slight edge in the ability to pass bond issues; however, the difference between the remaining 75 percent was thought to be inconclusive (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

The final factor studied by the group from Dain Bosworth was the relationship between median home value and median income and its connection to bond success rates. In districts where households had the higher median income and lived in homes with higher values, the bond success rate ran at a rate of 50.0 percent. The remaining four quartiles showed lower success rates, with the second quartile at 34.0 percent; the third quartile had a success rate of 38.7 percent; and the fourth quartile's success rate was 40.6 percent. These data would support the possibility that household income and its relationship to home value could be a factor for districts wishing to approve a school bond election. The remaining three quartiles have success rates significantly lower that the first quartile, but are not significantly different from each other (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

The findings of the Dain Bosworth study would indicate some demographic data could play a small part in the chances of a bond issue passing in a particular community. The community's understanding of finance would not be considered a factor in predicting the success rate for school bond issues; however, the public's perception about how a district manages

its finances could have a significant effect on the chances of approving a capital project (Dain Bosworth, 1996).

If demographics and the community's understanding of finance are slight factors in bond success rate, what are the variables that affect a district's chances of getting voters to approve a bond proposal?

Bechtel and Wood (1996) conducted a study involving twenty-two superintendents representing four urban and seventeen rural Iowa school districts that passed bond issues in the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years. The purpose of the study was to determine the strategies necessary for schools to successfully pass facility bond issues.

All superintendents supported the use of a citizen, bond promotion committee with various publics represented on the committee. Twelve of the superintendents ranked representatives of the business community (bankers, farmers, proprietors) as the most essential members. Only one superintendent felt it was necessary to include the architect in the promotion committee. Nineteen of the twenty-two interviewees used election day strategies to monitor the polls to be sure identified "yes" voters cast their votes. Sixteen school districts conducted a community survey ahead of their election campaign. Thirteen school districts conducted special voter registrations before the bond in an attempt to get as many potential positive voters registered before the election. When asked if their district identified

influential people in their community for support, 18 superintendents said they did. Again the superintendents who solicited the support of "power people" considered business people to be the most influential. All superintendents stated that their committee workers or school board members wrote newspaper articles, held public meetings, and distributed brochures. Only one representative superintendent stated the promotion committee did not send a reminder brochure just before the election (Bechtel & Wood, 1996).

Each superintendent was asked to offer three suggestions to school districts contemplating a bond issue. Five suggestions, in rank order, were predominant among the respondents: (1) provide accurate information, (2) use positive people on the committee, (3) demonstrate the need, (4) include the whole community, and (5) target "yes" voters. Each superintendent was then asked to offer three suggestions for things to avoid during an election campaign. The five common suggestions of things, in rank order, to avoid were: (1) negative people on promotion committee, (2) misinformation, (3) presenting the project as the "school's plan", (4) exclusion of any community group, and (5) elaborate (flashy) plans (Bechtel & Wood, 1996).

Holt's Study

This study is a replication of a study done in South Dakota by Carleton Holt (1993). The purpose of his study was to determine the variables that contributed to success or failure of bond issues in four South Dakota schools.

Of districts included in Holt's study that conducted successful bond elections, Holt concluded that low voter turnouts lends support for strategies that identify "yes" voters and making sure they get to the polls. Related research in this dissertation and Holt's research finding indicated the use of citizen committees was of critical importance for districts hoping to approve bond referenda. Media support was also termed as critical. According to Holt, citizens tended to support proposals when they were supplied with clear explanations of the districts' problems and plans for addressing those problems. Representatives of all four school districts considered techniques for canvassing and educating community members as necessary. This communication was provided through telephone campaigns, door-to-door canvassing, and public meetings. All four districts utilized a bond consultant to train their work groups (Holt, 1993).

Holt (1993) drew conclusions about the variables that contributed to failure of bond issues of the districts included in his study. The leading factor identified by representatives of the two school districts with failed bond issues was lack of understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of the voters in the district. Representatives of the selected districts came to this conclusion based on the existence of entrenched opposition groups in their communities. The board's decision to go ahead with the ballot question needed to be unanimous, as supported by the fact that the district suffering the greatest

defeat had a split board regarding the bond issue. Representatives of districts that were unsuccessful in passing a bond referendum stated that the property tax issue had a tremendous negative impact on the results.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The data collection methodology and procedures utilized by the researcher is discussed in Chapter 3. The procedures included: (1) review of related literature, (2) population and sample selection, (3) instrumentation, (4) data collection, and (5) data analysis.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methods and procedures applied by the researcher to address the problem statement. Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses (9th ed.) by Slade, Campbell, and Ballou (1994) was used as a guide for writing this dissertation.

Review of Related Literature

The review of literature related to condition of school buildings, factors affecting successful school bond issues, and variables affecting failed bond issues consisted of a computer search of Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE), PALS, FirstSearch, Resources in Education (RIE), Dissertations Abstracts International (DAI), and the Education Index. Additional review of literature was conducted using Review of Educational Research, Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Psychological Abstracts, and the Internet.

The review of literature was conducted at the I.D. Weeks Library on the campus of the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, Ballou Library on the

campus of Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, and the Media and Information Technology Services Center at Western Hills Area Education Agency, Sioux City, Iowa.

Population and Sample

Participants purposefully selected for this study came from school districts with student enrollments of the approximate size of the districts used in Holt's (1993) study. In Holt's (1993) study, the target size for selection was the 1988 median size school district in the United States of 2,197 students (Education Vital Signs, 1988). Subjects selected for this study represented four Iowa school districts with enrollments that fell closest to the national median enrollment and held school bond elections in a period between 1994 and 1998. Subjects were selected from two school districts that successfully approved bond issues and two that were unsuccessful in passing bond issues. School population data were obtained from the 1997-98 Annual Statistical Report to Iowa School Districts prepared by the Grant Wood Area Education Agency, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Dunn, 1997).

Four subjects represented each of the four school districts selected for the study. The superintendents of the four selected were included in the sample population. The superintendents were asked to select three other persons from their respective communities to participate in the study. Each

superintendent arranged for a member of his citizen committee, a newspaper editor, and a banker to participate in the research.

Instrumentation

The interview instrument included both structured and non-structured areas (see Appendix D). The instrument used in this study was the same one used in the Holt (1993) study. Content validity of the instrument was assumed from the previous study.

A two-part interview guide was used for each participant in this study. The first part of the interview guide asked subjects to answer specific questions related to the bond election held in their community. This part of the interview guide was designed with questions distinct to the role the participant played in the respective school district's campaign. The second part of the interview guide instructed respondents to offer their perceptions of certain aspects of the bond election in their community.

Data Collection

Four subjects from each of the four selected school districts were interviewed using questions related to factors affecting the success or failure of school bond elections in their respective communities. The interviewees included the school superintendent, a member of the citizen campaign team, the editor of the local newspaper, and a local banker. It was assumed these individuals were involved knowledgeable of the issues.

The researcher contacted the superintendents of the selected school districts to obtain cooperation in conducting the interviews. A letter was sent to the superintendent along with a request for assistance in contacting the other three individuals in the community (see Appendix C).

Participants had an opportunity to receive a copy of the structured questions in advance; however, during the course of the interviews, the researcher hand-recorded and audio taped the responses. Each participant was asked to provide any printed materials that he or she felt would be helpful to support the information shared in the course of the interviews.

Superintendent Interviews

Structured questions for the superintendent were specific to details of the proposed bond issue. The researcher asked the superintendent to provide data and statistics of the voting, plus the components of the project. Each superintendent was asked to comment in two unstructured areas: (1) Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue. (2) What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Committee Member Interviews

The researcher asked each committee member to answer specific questions regarding strategies used to promote the bond issue. Each committee member was asked to comment on unstructured topics: (1) Identify

and rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue. (2) What activities do you feel contributed to "yes" voters coming to the polls? (3) What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Newspaper Interviews

Newspaper editors participating in this study were asked to comment specifically on issues involving the media leading up to the bond election. The researcher asked the editors specific questions about the issue to ascertain how the media was included in the process. Newspaper editors were asked to respond to one open-ended statement and two open-ended questions: (1) Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue. (2) What did you perceive was the attitude of the general public toward the bond issue? (3) What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Banker Interviews

Responses to structured questions of bankers were used to determine their knowledge of and involvement with the bond issue. In addition, bankers were asked if they were invited to participate in the process. The researcher presented one unstructured statement and four unstructured questions to the bankers participating in the study: (1) Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

(2) What did you perceive was the attitude of the general public toward the bond issue? (3) What was the general state of the economy in this community at the time of this bond election? (4) What was the impact of the bond issue on the business climate of the community? (5) What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Data Analysis

Data were studied utilizing exploratory data analysis developed by Tukey (1971) see Appendix B). The researcher applied exploratory data analysis to basic information gathered in the interviews, plus a thorough review of the variables raised in the course of the interview sessions.

Exploratory data analysis (Tukey, 1971) is a technique for analyzing data by reducing multiple sets of data to their simplest terms. Researchers with expertise or background of the topic to be studied are considered capable of making interpretations of the data. Techniques of exploratory data analysis include the study of descriptions and analyzing them for universal use.

After the data were compiled, the researcher identified the similarities and differences among the responses of the various participants. Exploratory analysis was applied to these findings to determine factors that affected, either positively or negatively, the outcome of the bond issue in the purposefully selected school districts. The data were tabulated to form

conclusions of the factors of successful bond issues and factors of unsuccessful bond issues.

Tables were created in Chapter 4 of the study to illustrate the findings. Through the use of tables the researcher explained by example the following problem statements: (1) What variables contributed to the success of the school bond elections in two selected school districts? (2) What variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school districts? (3) What relationships existed among these variables with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This study explored factors that affected bond elections in four purposefully selected school districts in the State of Iowa. This study replicated a study done in South Dakota (Holt, 1993). The researcher utilized Tukey's (1971) exploratory data analysis to answer the following research questions:

1. What variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected school districts in Iowa?

2. What variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school districts in Iowa?

3. What relationships exist among these variables with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

Participants of the study included the school superintendent, a member of the bond promotion committee, a newspaper editor, and a banker representing each of the four selected school districts. Each participant responded to a set of structured questions related to the school bond election in that participant's community. In addition, participants offered their perceptions of factors that influenced the results of their bond elections through a series of unstructured questions. Each respondent offered their perception as to factors that had a critical impact on the success or

failure of the bond election in their community. Critical impact factors were events or situations that had a direct and significant impact on the results of the bond referendum.

Each participant in the interview process of this study was asked to provide data and their perceptions of various aspects of the school bond election held in their community. School districts A and B held successful bond elections, while school districts C and D were unsuccessful in their attempts to gain voter approval for a bond issue. Subjects from each of the four school districts were asked to respond to sets of structured and unstructured questions (see Appendix D).

Research Question One

Exploratory data analysis was used to analyze research question one: What variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected Iowa school districts?

In the unstructured portion of the interviews, subjects were asked to rank order those factors they believed led to the results of the election in their community. Respondents were asked to offer their advice to others preparing for a bond issue campaign.

As indicated by data in Table 1, the superintendent of School District A indicated community involvement as the number one factor for the successful passage of the bond election in that community. In addition he cited the fact

Table 1

Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election
Successful School District A

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Community involvement	Quality of volunteers	Backlash against negative underhanded tactics of opponents	Community pushers made it happen
2	People saw the need	Community proposal	Accessibility concern	Staff solidly behind the project
3	Small core committee, 100+ volunteers	Plan different than previous attempts voters felt the board listened to them	Work of promotion committee well organized	People received honest information
4		Cost effective proposal well explained and presented by committee	Return to neighborhood schools	Less costly than previous bond proposals
5			Committee able to work directly with architect	Brought back neighborhood schools

that people saw the need and the work of the core committee of over 100 volunteers as additional major factors.

Advice offered by representatives of School District A to persons preparing for bond issues is presented in Table 2. The superintendent suggested that school districts contemplating a bond issue should do some planning well ahead of the election. The superintendent of School District A held a belief that the community must lead the efforts for planning and promoting the proposal. He believed that the school board and he learned a lesson from previous failed attempts that the board must make the need clear, then allow the community considerable input in the design phase. After the plan is developed, a committee, representing a good cross section needs to promote the plan. He suggested making use of an architect as an assistant to the community committee.

The citizen representative of School District A praised the good work of the campaign committee. He ranked the quality of committee work as the factor that contributed the most to their successful election. Responses of the citizen representative were similar to those of the superintendent in that they both believed that people saw the plan as belonging to the community. The voter-approved plan was less costly than previous elections.

In his suggestions to others, the committee representative of School District A hypothesized that total community involvement was the key

Table 2

Advice to Others Preparing for Election
Successful School District A

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Involve the community	Total community involvement	Organize a citizen committee	Committee needs to be led By visible respected people
Make clear the need	Bring opposing sides together	Involve as many people as possible	Make sure you have staff support and they vote
Committee must represent a good cross section of the committee	Community must feel like it is "their" plan	Write letters to the editor	Honest information, backed by data and examples
Architect should be active In committee work	Avoid talking about what happens to old buildings	Disseminate clear information about taxes And costs	Give the good news and bad news – benefits and costs (taxes)
	Point out educational advantages	Try to do it right the first time to avoid costly and emotional campaigns	Personally contact people for support
	Concentrate on "yes" voters		Compare your infrastructure needs with those of other communities
	Use volunteers to conduct all campaign activities		

ingredient of their successful bond campaign. In addition, he suggested other community factors as critical: bringing together persons with opposing ideas and making sure the community sees it as "their" plan. The fact that the committee de-emphasized what would happen to old buildings was a significant strategy in their campaign. Another strategy he shared was to concentrate on "yes" votes and not attempting to change the minds of persons who indicated they could not support the bond issue. Another suggestion was to keep down the expense of the campaign by utilizing volunteers to do speaking engagements, distribute flyers, and put up yard signs.

The newspaper representative for School District A listed five factors relating to the District's successful bond election. Ranked first was the perception that the community was reacting to some negative maneuvers of persons opposed to the bond. The editor believed people in the community recognized that the old buildings lacked necessary accessibility for people who were mobility impaired. Also cited were two committee characteristics that he determined were leading causes for the successful vote: the committee was well organized and the committee was able to work directly with the architect. He ascertained that the community wanted neighborhood schools and this plan allowed them to return to the neighborhood school concept as opposed to the former grade alike structure.

When asked to offer suggestions for persons initiating bond issues, the newspaper representative offered four suggestions involving the campaign committee: (1) organize a promotion committee, (2) involve as many people as possible, (3) disseminate clear information about costs and taxes, and (4) do it right the first time to avoid costly and emotional future campaigns. He also suggested that persons use the media, by writing letters to the editor.

The banker in School District A contended that influential persons in the community got behind the bond proposal and convinced enough voters of the need for the project. The chairman of the committee was a respected farmer in the community. Because the chairman and several other committee members were seen as credible people, offering honest information, the community got behind the issue. The banker of School District A also cited the fact that the school staff was solidly behind the proposal, which in itself would garner a significant number of "yes" votes. He also felt that substantial changes from the plans of former failed referendums helped get the final proposal approved. Reducing the costs over previous bond elections and bringing back neighborhood schools were seen as instrumental to the bond approval.

School District B was the other school successful in its attempt to approve a school bond issue. Table 3 outlines the ranked factors for the success as perceived by the superintendent, campaign committee chairman,

Table 3

Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election
Successful School District B

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Unanimous support by board	Many volunteers on citizens committee	Voters need to see the need	Board and administration talking the same program
2	Confidence in board and administration	Growth in community – citizens knew more space was needed	Good leadership on the committee	Committee developed a sense of community
3	Community clearly saw the need	Supporters turned out on election day	Committee provided a good explanation of the need and showed how plan met those needs	Community saw the plan as the best option
4	Excellent committee leadership	Committee had sufficient financing		Committee well organized
5		Concentrated on voters who had children in school		
6		Involved community in building design		
7		Focused on benefits to public school children		

newspaper editor, and banker of School District B. Table 4 illustrates a list of the suggestions offered by the four representatives of School District B to others contemplating a school bond election.

The superintendent of School District B claimed that the unanimous support from the board was the most important factor leading to approval of the district's bond proposal. In previous bond election attempts in the district, the board was not always unanimous in supporting the proposed plan. The superintendent of District B contended that without the board's total commitment to the project, success was unlikely in the community. As a result of changes in school board membership and school administrative personnel, the community had a new sense of confidence in the board and administration. This sense of confidence led voters to vote in support of the $11.0 million bond issue for a new high school. The community in which School District B is located was undergoing a rapid population growth. After three failed attempts to build new facilities, people in the community began to realize that delays in construction of new buildings were causing serious overcrowding in the existing school buildings. The superintendent of School District B noted that the same person chaired the three failed bond attempts. In the fourth attempt, a different committee member took over the duties of chairman. The superintendent believed the new chair was more dynamic and

was able to influence the community enough to gain the necessary votes for approval of the ballot question.

Outlined in Table 4 is the advice offered to others preparing for a bond election. The advice was provided by the representatives of School District B, a district successful in approving a bond election.

When asked for his advice to others, the superintendent of School District B had seven suggestions. His first suggestion was to put in writing the needs of the school district and share that information through every means possible. In School District B the campaign committee developed a bound booklet that contained a plethora of information about the community. The booklet provided historical data regarding building construction, enrollment, community population trends, finance, and student program offerings. Contained in the booklet were predictions of future district needs and plans for meeting the identified needs. Colorful illustrations of the details of the proposed bond issue were provided in the booklet. The booklets were personalized and delivered to community organizations and made available, on loan, to any person in the community. The superintendent recommended a school-community relations program, developed ahead of the bond issue, as critical to voter approval. He also suggested that the committee lead the entire campaign, with school board members and administrators working as incognizant participants. The superintendent believed many people did not

Table 4

Advice to Others Preparing for Election
Successful School District B

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Put in writing the identified needs – share through every means available	Create a comprehensive document that explains everything for reference	Don't be over confident or arrogant to opposition	Make sure school staff supports the project
Build strong school-community relations program well ahead of the election	Select a strong central campaign committee cadre	Publish everything	Board and administration operates behind-the scenes
Let the community lead the campaign	Let the community know what is going on every step of the way	Spell out the need	Establish a credible committee of citizens to head up the the process
Assume written materials will not be read – do a video	Committee needs to raise plenty of money to fund their activities		Explain that all options were considered
Engage staff in the process	Make sure "yes" voters show up – use a poll watcher		Committee needs to be highly organized
Hire an architect early in the process	Need many workers on the support committee		Have plenty of volunteers working the community
Don't hurry the process			

read the materials made available, but would view a video that was short and concise. In his opinion, staff support of a bond issue is absolutely critical. First of all, the staff represents a large voting bloc. Second, school staff members carry a certain amount of credibility with the community, especially support personnel. In addition, the superintendent suggested hiring an architect early in the process. This comment was based on the fact that the school board utilized a building consultant through the planning process and did not contract with an architect until after the bond issue passed. Although the election was successful, the superintendent of School District B did not recommend the process they put to use. Because a district is planning for buildings that could last eighty to one hundred years, the superintendent of School District suggested project designers take time to do sufficient planning.

The campaign committee member of School District B believed the size and make-up of her committee was the most important factor in getting the bond issue approved. The community was always well aware of the need, but certain strategies used by the committee made the difference in this election over previous attempts. She identified the following strategies as most critical: (1) got out the "yes" voters, (2) committee had sufficient financial support, (3) concentrated on persons with children in school, (4) involved the

community in the design, and (5) focused on the benefits children would realize.

When offering advice, the committee representative of School District B offered the same suggestion as the superintendent in regard to the development of a comprehensive document that explains everything in detail. She also suggested that a strong central committee be established to lead the campaign efforts. This committee needs to raise plenty of funds to pay for their activities and must be well represented in the community. Her recommendation for good communication with the community matched the suggestion by the superintendent. The community must be in touch with the process from start to finish. Her final recommendation was to put forth considerable effort to be sure the identified "yes" voters show up at the polls by using precinct workers.

When the newspaper representative of School District B was asked to rank the factors that led to the successful bond election in his district, he believed the fact the people in the community saw the need was most critical in passage of the proposal. In follow-up he contended that the committee did a good job of leading the project and providing the public with detailed explanations of the needs and how the project met those needs.

The newspaper representative advised persons or groups considering bond elections to remain courteous and unassuming in their campaign

strategies. Previous election attempts in School District B failed because committee members were viewed as having an aura of overconfidence and arrogance about the project. The committee involved with the latest attempt concentrated on the need, rather than trying to berate voters into supporting the issue. As a newspaper person, he suggested that committees make good use of the media and publish everything they can.

The banker of School District B adhered to the belief that a unanimous board and administration was the difference in gaining the support for their bond issue. This fact helped the community see the need. The banker also maintained that the committee was a key factor in their successful bond. The committee was well organized and had a sense of community.

Because the bond proposal was strongly supported by the school staff in School District B, the banker of School District B suggested that schools wanting to gain approval for bond issue make certain the staff is well informed of the issues and supports it in the community. The board and administration need to clearly explain that all options were considered before the plan was approved. Although the board and administration needed to state the needs, they should stay behind the scenes in the promotion process. He proposed the establishment of a credible committee of volunteers who have the ability to organize themselves.

Research Question Two

Exploratory data analysis was used to analyze research question two: What variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected Iowa school districts?

In the unstructured portion of the interviews, subjects were asked to rank order those factors they believed led to the results of the election in their community. In addition respondents were asked to offer their advice to others preparing for a bond issue campaign.

School District C was unsuccessful in its attempt to approve a proposal to build a new middle school. Table 5 contains data reflecting ranked factors affecting the election in School District C as perceived by the superintendent, a representative of the citizen campaign committee, the newspaper editor, and a community banker. Table 6 lists the advice offered by the representatives of School District C to others thinking of school bond elections in their communities.

The superintendent of School District C indicated that a review of post election data revealed that many of the identified "yes" voters did not show up on election day. In his opinion the campaign committee identified a sufficient number of citizens who had indicated their support for the proposal. The fact that many of these persons did not vote was the major reason for failure of the ballot question. The choice of site for the new middle school became an

Table 5

Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election
Unsuccessful School District C

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Yes voters did not vote	Citizens did not like site	Voters confused about the project – too many variables	Price of land for school site perceived as too high
2	Site not acceptable to many people	Recent merger of school district	Cost of land for school site seen as too high	People didn't like the site
3	Many people still upset about recent school merger	Taxes perceived as too high by residents of smallest district involved in school merger	Cost of project perceived as too high	Concern with format and design of building
4	Many business people wanted a plan that included more community use	Too many people on fixed income did not support the bond proposal	Farmers feel their taxes are already too high - agricultural conditions bad at time of election	Recent school reorganization still an issue with many people
5		Strategies of support committee were not always effective	Citizens didn't see the need school officials have taken such good care of old buildings people didn't see structure problems	Tax rates high because district is property poor

Table 6

Advice to Others Preparing for Election
Unsuccessful School District C

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Keep the plan simple	Get the facts and information Correct	Identify "yes" voters and make sure they vote	Educate the public
Gain agreement on site ahead of the election	Provide citizens with history of school – building construction, taxes, costs	Make sure staff is in support and they vote	Clearly explain why site was selected and why it is the best option
Keep timelines for the campaign short	Make sure committee represents a good community cross section	Do sample polls of various issues of the project	Create a forum for people to express their opinions and thoughts
	Be sure families are well represented on promotion committee	Contact people who are opposed in previous elections and find out their opinions	Provide grassroots input in the design and plan
		Don't develop a plan and then try to sell it – let the community develop plan	Point out how local businesses will benefit from the construction
		Everyone on committee should be in favor of the plan	

issue in the community during the campaign process. He surmised this issue was a leading cause for the unsuccessful vote. A recent, controversial reorganization of the district contributed to voter discontent. After the reorganization, many farmers realized an increase in property taxes, thus they openly opposed the project. The proposal included a private donation of one million dollars for the gymnasium. The superintendent reported that many representatives of the business community believed this money was intended for use as a community recreation center and wanted that included in the school plan. Because their ideas were not included in the planning, some business persons did not support the bond proposal.

The superintendent of School District C offered three suggestions to others who wish to initiate the process of a bond campaign. One suggestion was development of a plan that is simple for the public to understand. Because of the controversy in School District C regarding the proposed site, agreement on the site needs to be established well ahead of designing the building. The superintendent felt the campaign process stretched out too long. He opined that many supporters became weary and complacent with the process. Also, it gave opponents more time to develop side issues that distracted from the goals of the bond issue.

When asked what factor most influenced the results of the election in School District C, the citizen committee representative indicated the choice of

site for the new school. People in the community opposed the site and the arrangement used by the board to purchase the site. The citizen representative substantiated the belief of the superintendent that the recent merger of the school district was still unsettled causing discontentment among voters. According to the citizen representative of School District C, taxes became an issue that affected the election results. In particular persons in the smallest school district involved in the school merger and persons on fixed incomes made an issue of taxation. These efforts spread concern among other property owners in reference to increased taxes. The committee chairman felt the campaign committee could have done better with some of its promotion strategies. Specifically, he felt the committee did not seek the support of the school staff. He also believed the committee needed to resolve the issue of the choice of site and the appropriate use of the one million dollar donation for the gymnasium.

The citizen committee chairman of School District C offered suggestions for improving the chances of a bond election. The suggestions were in the areas of communication and committee work. He recommended that a concerted effort come from the school board and campaign committee to make sure citizens get facts and accurate information, particularly in regard to history of the school, building construction plans, costs, and taxes. He

suggested that the committee be representative of the community and have a sufficient number of members representing families.

The newspaper editor of School District C asserted that the leading cause of failure for the bond election, in his community, was a perception that the project that had too many variables. Issues involving the site and private donations created confusion among voters. He alleged that perceived money issues, such as cost of the project and tax increases, were factors that contributed to lack of support for the project. Many citizens believed the district paid too much for the property for the proposed school site, the price tag for the building project was too high, and property taxes increases needed to fund the project were more than farmers could afford. The newspaper editor claimed that many people did not see the need to construct new buildings, because the current buildings were well maintained.

In his offerings of advice to others, the newspaper editor emphasized the importance of making sure "yes" voters cast their votes. The editor offered five other suggestions: (1) make sure the school staff is in support of the bond issue, (2) canvass the community, (3) contact people opposed to previous elections to find out the issues, (4) let the community come up with the site and building plan, and (5) make sure all members of the campaign committee solidly support the plan.

In school District C, the banker representative surmised the voters in the community perceived the price of the land for the school site to be too high. He ranked this as the number one factor affecting the bond election in School District C. Not only did people deem the site cost as too much, they did not think it was the best location. The banker held a perception that a large number of people in the community wanted a different building design and structure. According to the banker many people felt the district needed to make improvements to elementary school buildings rather than erect a new middle school. The banker concurred with the superintendent and citizen representative in that the recent school merger became a distraction for voters, thus many did not support the bond issue. The banker theorized that people in the community recognized the school district had one of the lowest low tax bases in the State, which would mean high tax rate increases for property owners.

When asked what kind of advice he could offer, the banker of School District C pointed to issues of education for the public. He asserted that a clear explanation of the plan and how it was conceived would encourage a higher number of supporters. A forum setting, endorsed by the school board, to allow people to offer suggestions and opinions would help alleviate confusion and engage the community in the process at a grassroots level.

The board should make a strong statement of the benefits businesses could realize through the construction phase of this project.

Table 7 lists the ranked factors contributing to a failed bond attempt in School District D. These perceptions were gained through interviews of the superintendent, the campaign committee chairman, a newspaper editor, and a banker. Table 8 contains a tabulation of advice offered to others from the above named persons.

The superintendent of School District D explained how the community had just approved a bond issue for a recreation center. In addition, a hospital support group had just completed a community fundraiser to build a large addition to the local hospital. It was the superintendent's contention that a bond issue on the heels of these two projects was the leading cause of the unsuccessful attempt to build a new middle school. Second, he was concerned with the number of volunteers working on the bond promotion committee. It was his belief that the committee needed many more volunteers than it had if they were to successfully canvass their community. Many volunteers who promoted the recreation center and hospital projects were burned out and did not come forward to work on the school project.

Suggestions from the superintendent of School District D fell in line with the factors he identified as causing the bond issue to fail. He proposed that a community hoping to pass a bond issue should have a committee

Table 7

Ranked Factors Impacting Bond Election
Unsuccessful School District D

Rank	Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
1	Bond issue followed major community projects	Parents to parochial school concerned their school would suffer by new school	Cost of project perceived as too high	Other major community projects were still in the works
2	Committee needed to represent a better community cross section	No professional help	Recently remodeled administration building perceived as unnecessary	Committee needed more representation and more volunteers
3	Not enough volunteers on the promotion committee	Taxes seen as too high already	Committee and school officials didn't pay enough attention to concerns of senior citizens	Not enough information provided to community
4		Citizens concerned about about the use of old building		Parents of parochial school students did not support the bond issue
5		Purchase of property before the vote perceived as cart before the horse		Senior citizens needed to be brought into the discussion
6		People critical about expense of remodeling the central administration offices		

Table 8

Advice to Others Preparing for Election
Unsuccessful School District D

Superintendent	Citizen	Newspaper	Banker
Organize committee with as many members as possible	Provide plenty of information no surprises	Organize a large committee	Extensive planning
Have full committee support for project design	Show the option as the most cost effective	Hold several public meetings	Have good community input in plan
Committee is key to successful bond issue	Don't compromise details stick to the plan	Use the newspaper – publish all that you can	Establish plan for good communication with community
	Survey community to find out where pockets of resistance might be	Publicize the preliminary work – people need to know what is going on start to finish	Community needs to know why the site was chosen
	Include accessibility and safety in your building issues	Make sure every knows just which students are affected	Explain tax implications clearly
	Be aware of other politics going in the community		

membership large enough to canvass the community and represent the various school audiences. The committee is the key factor in getting a bond issue passed in any community. He also suggested that the school board conduct community polls to get a sense of how the community perceived the district's needs and make sure they did not repeat the mistake of his district and try to run a bond issue at a time when the community is recovering from other major taxation and fundraising efforts.

The citizen committee chairman cited a number of factors he felt contributed to the failure of the bond election in School District D. At the top of his list was the belief that parents of parochial school children saw the building project as a threat to their school's existence. As chairman of the committee, he often felt inadequate in his ability to lead campaign issues, because of his lack of experience and background. He opined that the committee needed training in strategies for conducting a school bond campaign. The committee was battling too many side issues in their work. He stated the following as issues that influenced the election results: (1) taxes were perceived as too high already, (2) citizens did not understand how old building would be used, (3) purchasing the property before the election was seen as inappropriate, and (4) the district had just spent a considerable amount of money remodeling the central administration offices.

The chairman of the citizen committee in School District D provided six suggestions for promoting a school bond issue. He maintained that people cannot receive too much information. In School District D there were cases of unexplained actions that should have been made clear ahead of the vote, e.g. the reason for purchasing the proposed site and how the old middle school building was going to be used. Many people thought the project cost too much, although the estimated cost was only $77 per square foot. The citizen committee chairman suggested that cost comparison information should be a major part of the campaign. Show the citizens how the cost compares to other schools doing similar projects. He also suggested taking the time to plan the project and promotion strategies, so it passes the first time. Communities should study their citizen groups carefully to understand where pockets of resistance might exist and pay attention to local politics. It is important for boards and committees to be aware of other major community projects happening or in the proposal stages that could interfere with the school bond. Speak to issues of accessibility and safety was another piece of advice he offered.

The newspaper editor of School District D ranked cost of the project as the number one reason why the bond issues failed. In her opinion, citizens thought the price was too high. She also believed the community did not favor board-approved expenditures for the renovation of the central

administration office, then asking taxpayers to finance a new middle school. The promotion committee did not pay sufficient attention to senior citizens. She based this conclusion on her perception that older persons were not represented on the campaign committee.

More participation on the support committee was the first suggestion submitted by the newspaper editor of School District D. In her opinion, the committee needed to better represent all facets of the school community in order to be effective. Three suggestions made by the editor were in regard to communication with the public. She suggested holding several meetings for citizens so questions can be answered and clarifications provided. She also recommended using the local newspaper by publishing as much as possible, including the preliminary work, so the community knows what is going on with the project form start to finish. Because she believed there was considerable confusion in School District D about the grades affected by their proposed bond issue, the affected grade levels needs to be made absolutely clear to voters.

In the opinion of the banker of School District D, the leading factor affecting the outcome of the school bond election in his community was the fact that the bond issue was initiated too quickly after other major community projects. The recent construction of a new recreation center and hospital addition reduced the number of persons willing to vote in support of the bond

issue. Other factors cited by the banker were the same as those indicated by others interviewed. These factors mentioned included the need for better community representation on the promotion committee. Another factor broached was lack of information provided to the community in regard to project details. The banker substantiated the feelings the citizen committee chairman that there was little support from parents of parochial school children. According to the banker of School District D, lack of engagement of senior citizens in the process seemed evident.

The banker of School District D rendered recommendations to others that centered on planning and communication. His first proposal included planning based on past experiences. Persons promoting bond issues must pay attention to what has happened in the district prior to the bond issue and plan around those considerations. His remaining recommendations included a plan for getting input from all segments of the community. Communication needs to be two-way, to give citizens a sense of a community plan versus a school plan. A good faith effort needs to be made to make sure people understand the background of the decisions that the board makes and just how the project will affect property taxes.

Research Question Three

Exploratory data analysis was used to analyze research question three: What relationships exist among the variables of successful and failed bond elections with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts? In the structured portion of the interviews, subjects were asked questions about characteristics of the bond election in their respective community.

Demographic data were obtained through structured interviews of the superintendents of the school districts selected for this study (see Table 9). School districts A and B were successful in their attempts to approve a referendum to bond for new construction of high schools. School districts C and D were unsuccessful in obtaining the necessary votes to approve a bond election to construct new middle schools.

School District A sought a $8.75 million dollar bond to construct a new high school. This was the district's third attempt at obtaining the necessary 60 percent majority for passage of a bond proposal. Fifty percent of registered voters turned out for the election, of which 2,174 cast affirmative votes. The number of "yes" votes represented a 66.8 percent majority, sufficient to approve the proposal. Although the superintendent did not note any of the listed items as having a critical impact, a few items on the table stand out. The district hired an architect 18 months ahead of the election.

Table 9

Structured Superintendent's Demographic Data

Demographic Factor	Successful School A	Successful School B	Unsuccessful School C	Unsuccessful School D
# of Dollars	$8.75 m	$11.0 m	$6.5 m	9.9 m
# of Yes Votes	2,174	1,287	1,310*	1,704
# of No Votes	1,079	840	1,240	1,801
% of Support	66.8%	60.5%	51.4%	48.6%
% of Turnout	50%	30%	47%	45%
Attempt #	3rd	4th	1st	1st
Board Vote	5-0	7-0*	7-0	5-0
Date of Vote	10/4/94	5/12/98	10/28/97	10/15/96*
Bond Consultant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Months Architect Prior to Election	18	0*	12	12
Other Consultant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
# Square Feet	123,000	110,000	50,000	128,000
$ Per $1,000 Valuation	$3.65	$2.70	$2.70	$2.56
Other Financing	No	No	Yes	No

*Critical Impact

This was six months sooner than any of the other districts that participated in the study. Another item of significance in the data was the tax rate needed to fund the project. The district needed to list two questions on the ballot. Because the amount of the bond required a tax rate above the $2.70 per

$1,000 of assessed valuation barrier established by Iowa law (Legislative Service Bureau, 1997), the district had to run a second ballot question asking for voter approval to exceed $2.70. Voters in School District A approved both measures by the 60 perecent margin to allow the school board to initiate the bond sale. School District A contracted for the services of a bond financial consultant and employed a bond attorney.

In their fourth attempt, voters in School District B approved a measure to issue bonds in the amount of $11.0 million to build a new high school. The proposal was narrowly approved by 60.5 percent of the 30 percent of registered voters who showed up for the election. The only financing under consideration for the project was the proceeds of the bond sale. The superintendent identified two factors as having a critical impact on the successful election: (1) not contracting with an architect, (2) unanimous support of the bond proposal by board members. In previous attempts the district employed an architect to design the project and assist in promoting it to the public. In follow-up studies of unsuccessful referenda, citizens questioned the motives of the architect and felt the buildings were too elaborate. In the successful attempt, the board employed a project designer rather than an architect to provide the initial floor plan for the new high school. The project designer also assisted the board in estimating the cost of the project; therefore, the board opted not to hire a bond consultant. In the

election previous to the successful vote, one board member did not support the proposal. According to the superintendent of School District B, the unanimous vote of the board sent a signal to the community of board unity on this project.

School District C was unsuccessful in its first attempt to approve a bond issue to build a new middle school. The school board hired an architect twelve months ahead of the election and contracted for the services of a bond consultant and bond attorney. The tax rate was $2.70 per $1,000 of assessed valuation representing the limit allowed by law without a second ballot question. Board members were unanimous in their vote to place the bond question on the October 28, 1997 ballot. A majority of voters supported the project, but the required 60 percent of affirmative votes was not obtained. Other financing was available for the project through a private donation of $1 million to pay for the cost of the gymnasium. The superintendent identified the number of "yes" votes as having a critical impact on the unsuccessful bid for the new middle school. Pre-election campaign workers ascertained more "yes" votes than the 1,310 who voted for the proposition. In the post election review of the voter lists, campaign workers identified several potential supporters who did not vote in the election.

School District D asked voters to approve a bond issue of $9.9 million to construct a new middle school. In their first attempt at the proposition, 48.6

percent of the 45 percent of registered voters cast their votes in favor. The school board members of School District D unanimously voted to hold the referendum to sell bonds. The school board hired an architect twelve months prior to the election and utilized the services of a bond consultant and bond attorney. A tax rate asking of $2.56 per $1,000 of property valuation required only one ballot question in regards to selling bonds for construction of the new school building. The superintendent of School District D stated that the timing of the election had a critical impact on the election results, because a few months prior to the school election, voters had approved a bond issue for upgrading the community's recreation center.

In Table 10 the researcher outlined responses to questions posed to all interviewees regarding their respective bond election. School districts A and B were successful in their bond elections, while school districts C and D were unsuccessful in their attempts. Most of the responses of the interviewees in all four districts were similar with a few exceptions.

A majority of interviewees felt the bond promotion committee was a critical factor in the outcome of their elections. At least one interviewee from each school district indicated that the promotion committee had a critical impact on the results of the bond election. In District D every interviewee listed the promotion committee as having a critical impact on their failed bond attempt. The superintendent of School District D believed the group lacked a

sufficient number of volunteers to adequately promote the issue to all segments of the committee. The superintendent estimated the size of the committee to be from thirty to fifty volunteers. In the course of the interview, the superintendent indicated that the community in which School District D is located needed a committee of two to three hundred volunteers to be effective. The other three interviewees of School District D felt their committee lacked representation of all portions of the community, especially blue collar groups. Interviewees in districts A and B, who had successful campaigns, gave their committee most of the credit for the success. Each of the two districts experienced failed attempts in the past. Interviewees of the two districts believed a change in committee membership and new strategies made the difference in the change of voter sentiment.

The banker in District A believed an effective telephone campaign made the difference in their district's election in comparison to the two previous failed attempts. The effect of the telephone campaign was not considered as having a critical impact by any other interviewees in any of the districts.

In School District C the participating community member and newspaper editor believed building a middle school versus improvements to elementary schools contributed to the district's failed election. Both participants agreed with the position of the board, but felt the community was

Table 10

Structured Common Questions

School	Pos	Facility	Gym	Pro Group	Con Group	Telephone Campaign	Door-to Door	Poll Watcher	Public Meetings
A	S	HS	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	C	HS	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A	N	HS	Yes	Yes*	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
A	B	HS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes
B	S	HS	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	C	HS	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
B	N	HS	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	DK	Yes
B	B	HS	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	DK	Yes
C	S	MS	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	C	MS*	Yes*	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C	N	MS*	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
C	B	MS	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	S	MS	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	C	MS	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	N	MS	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	B	MS	Yes	Yes*	No	DK	Yes	DK	Yes*

*Critical Impact

Schools A & B =Successful Campaigns
Schools C & D = Unsuccessful Campaigns
HS = High School
MS = Middle School

S = Superintendent
C = Citizen Committee Member
N = Newspaper Editor
B = Banker

divided on which buildings had the greatest needs. The community member representing School District C also believed the fact that a gym was included in the project had a negative effect on the end result. The community believed that because the community was divided on the topic of whether a recreation center should be included in the school plan, the gym became an issue.

The banker of School District D was of the opinion that not enough public meetings were held to explain the plan to the community. The banker of School District D felt there was a considerable amount of confusion and misinformation on the part of the community. He believed many people were unsure which grades of students were to be effected and the tax implications. He opined that more public meetings would have helped alleviate the concerns and misunderstandings.

Based on the recorded responses, some participants in the interviews were unaware of activities of the bond committee. The banker of School District D did not know if a telephone campaign was used in his community as part of campaign promotion strategies. Four of the sixteen interviewees could not recall if poll watchers were utilized in their community's election.

In school districts A and B there appeared to be a difference of perception about whether organized opposition was present in their district. In the course of the interview, as participants elaborated on their responses, it

became an issue of definition of "organized." The committee member representing School District A admitted there were groups opposed to the bond issue, but believed the strategies employed by their membership to be very ineffective; therefore, he characterized them as having little effect on the bond issue. The superintendent of School District B felt there was some opposition to the bond issue in the form of letters to the editor, but knew of no media advertisements opposing the bond issue paid for by any particular group.

Participants of School District A had distinct differences in their observations in regard to campaign strategies utilized in their district. The superintendent and newspaper editor of School District A were not aware of a telephone campaign, whereas the banker believed it had a critical impact on the success of their election. The newspaper editor did not believe the district utilized a telephone campaign, door-to-door canvassing, or a poll watcher. Only the committee member acknowledged the use of door-to-door canvassing as a strategy in their campaigning efforts. The lack of awareness could be due to the fact that school administrators and school board members remained behind the scenes in the campaign process. By design the promotion committee, represented by a good community cross section, led the planning and publicizing of the project.

Based on the data revealed in Table 11, none of the bankers interviewed for this study was consulted as part of the bond campaign process. Although none was consulted , the bankers believed this was not critical to the results of the bond election in the respective community.

Table 11

Structured Banker Data

School	A	B	C	D
Consulted on Feasibility	No	No	No	No

*Critical Impact

All newspaper representatives interviewed for this study indicated their newspaper offices received letters of support for the bond issue (see Table 12). In School District A, the major reason for support as indicated in letters to the editor was the perception that School District A had too many buildings. Approval of the bond proposal would reduce the number of buildings the district would need to maintain, thus saving costs for building maintenance.

School District B is a growing district in terms of school enrollment. Supporters of the bond issue, that wrote letters to the editor, most often cited growing enrollment as their basis for support. In the two districts with

Table 12

Structure Newspaper Editor Data

Schools	A	B	C	D
Letters supporting bond issue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Major reason for support	Too many buildings	Increasing enrollment	Age of buildings	Age of buildings
Letters opposing bond issue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Major reason for opposition	Buildings still good	Too expensive	Site of new school*	Project too elaborate
Editorial by newspaper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Editorial position	Support	Support	Support	Support

*Critical Impact

unsuccessful bond elections, editorials centered on a concern for the age of school buildings currently in use in their school districts.

Newspaper representatives from each of the four school districts selected for this study indicated they received letters opposing the bond issue. However, each newspaper editor reported the newspaper received more letters in support than in opposition to the building proposal. The newspaper editor representing School District C believed the negative letters

to the editor were significant, contributing factors to the failure of the bond referendum in that school district. The major reason for opposition to the bond issue was different for each of the four districts. In School District A, persons in opposition to the project proposal felt the existing buildings were still in good condition and should continue to be used. Persons opposing the bond issue in School District B believed the project was too expensive and should have been pared down before it was brought up for a vote. Those in opposition to the bond election in School District D had similar feelings, but were concerned the plan was too embellished for the real needs of the community. In School District C the newspaper editor cited letters sent to the editor in opposition to the bond issue as having a critical impact on the election results. The newspaper editor in School District C believed many persons in the community considered the site selected for the new school a poor location, and letters to the editor substantiated these beliefs for many voters.

Each interviewed newspaper representative indicated their own staff writers wrote letters in the editorial section of their respective newspapers supporting the bond issue. However, none of the newspaper persons believed this was critical to the results of the election in their community.

Data reported by citizen committee representatives are outlined in Table 13. Each citizen was asked to indicate how they become a member of

the committee – by selection or by volunteering. The committee persons represented by districts A and B volunteered for their posts. The committee representative of School District B believed the fact that she had replaced the chair of previous failed bond elections was critical to getting the bond issue approved in the final attempt. The committee chairman of School District B believed her selection was critical to the election results. The citizen representing School District B indicated she was selected by the board as the committee chairman, and the other members were appointed to work in other capacities. She believed the committee might have been better perceived by the public if a board-appointed core committee had selected their remaining membership and their own officers.

Three of the four community members believed the composition of the committee was critical to their elections. School districts A and B reported large committees with a good cross-section of community membership. In school districts C and D, the committees were considered well represented; however, the membership was small when compared to school districts A and B. The committee chairman of School District D felt the composition of their committee had a critical impact on the failure of their bond attempt. The chairman of the committee of School D reported the committee did not have sufficient numbers to conduct an effective canvass of the community. He also cited the fact that not every committee member supported the bond

Table 13

Structured Citizen Committee Data

	Schools			
Unsuccessful	School A – Successful	School B – Successful	School C – Unsuccessful	School D -
How selected	Attended meeting calling For volunteers	Volunteered – involved in previous bond campaigns*	Invited by superintendent and board*	Selected by board
Make-up of Committee	Business representatives, banker, blue collar, several citizens from all segments of community*	Forty members, from all segments of community*	Eleven-member core committee representing a complete cross section of community, 200 volunteers	Senior citizens, parents business people of influence, not all supported bond issue*
Activities Utilized	Slogans, building tours, community polls, yard signs, public meetings, flyers, information brochures	Petition drive, workshops with school board, flyers, information booths around the community, telephone surveys	Public meetings, finance meetings, flyers, voter drives, community liaison program, neighborhood meetings, meetings at senior citizens centers	Organization meetings planning sessions, community canvass, poll watchers, study groups, mailings
Method for Determining Activities	Committee studied campaigns of other communities, brain-storming sessions	Set up timelines, reviewed strategies of other schools knew we need to identify "yes" voters	Superintendent shared ideas from other schools, used subcommittees	Committee obtained sample materials from other schools
Method of Fundraising	Banker contacted business and private Citizens for donations	PTA gave $800, held fundraisers for the rest	Raised $5,000 by making calls to individuals asking for donations	Business and individuals were asked to donate

*Critical Impact

proposal. In his opinion this was a serious detriment to a successful campaign.

Promotion committees in each of the four districts utilized for this study used many of the same types of activities to educate the public and encourage support for the building project. Each committee representative reported using the following as parts of campaign efforts for bond promotion: community canvass, public meetings, and printed brochures. Committees in school districts A, C, and D conducted meetings tailored specifically for a particular audience, e.g. senior citizens, business persons, neighborhoods groups. Committee members in School District A distributed colorful yard signs around their community as a means of drawing attention to the election. The citizen committee representative from School District A believed the activities utilized by their committee had a critical impact on the success of their community's bond election.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

A summary of the study, conclusions, discussion, and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5. The chapter is divided into four sections as follows: the first section is a summary of the study, section two provides conclusions drawn from the findings, section three is a discussion based on the findings and conclusions, and recommendations are presented in section four.

Summary

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the variables that affect the outcome of school bond elections. It is a replication of research conducted by Carleton Holt at the University of South Dakota (1993). The method for analyzing data in the study was exploratory analysis, which involves evaluation of simple descriptions of research material by persons who have background and expertise in the problem studied (Tukey, 1971). The researcher for this study has twenty-one years of experience as a school administrator and has been involved in bond issues in two different school districts.

Three questions guided this study:

1. What variables contributed to the success of school bond elections in two selected school districts in Iowa?

2. What variables contributed to the failure of school bond elections in two selected school districts in Iowa?

3. What relationships exist among these variables with regard to selected characteristics of the school districts?

Literature Review

Fourteen million American children spend 180 days per year for thirteen years in America's public schools. Many of these school buildings are in near deplorable condition. The problem is so widespread, the United State General Accounting Office estimated it would take over $112 billion to bring America's elementary and secondary schools into reasonable condition. The problem is common throughout both urban and rural communities (Moseley-Braun, 1997).

The problem in Iowa is no different than the rest of the nation. Twenty-five percent of school buildings in Iowa were constructed near the turn of the twentieth century (Roos, 1997). Consultants from Iowa State University estimated it would cost taxpayers nearly $871 million during the 1990's alone to make needed repairs to school buildings (Bartusek, 1994).

Studies in Virginia and North Dakota provided data that made a connection between the physical condition of school buildings and student achievement. Analysis of test data of students attending above-standard schools was compared to students in schools with substandard conditions. The analyses showed that students of above-standard schools scored higher

on basic skills tests than students in substandard schools (Case, Earthman, & Hines, 1997).

A major barrier to passing bond issues in Iowa is garnering the 60 percent, supermajority of "yes" votes required, by Iowa Code, for bond approval (Davidson, 1994).

A study conducted in Iowa by Dain Bosworth (1996) indicated that demographic factors of a community played a small role in the success or failure of bond issues. If communities are going to pass bond issues, they need to study the data created through the experience of schools that attempted bond issues. In order to pass bond issues, schools need to turn to marketing strategies (Graham, Wise, & Bachman, 1990). While no two communities are alike in terms of needs, population, and values; there are strategies that are common in the bond promotion process. These strategies include: (1) use of a bond campaign committee, (2) public meetings, (3) mailings, (4) community surveys, and (5) poll watchers. This study analyzed these strategies as they applied to the school districts selected for the study.

Methodology

Subjects for this study represented four purposefully selected school districts in the State of Iowa. The four school districts had an average K-12 enrollment of 2,202 students and held bond elections between 1994 and

1998. Two of the schools selected experienced successful bond elections; two were unsuccessful in their attempts to approve bond referendums.

Interviews were conducted with the superintendent, a citizen of the campaign promotion committee, a newspaper editor, and a banker from each of the four selected school districts. Each participant was asked to respond to a series of structured questions related to the bond issue in their respective community. In addition, the respondents were asked to give their perception of the reasons the bond issue passed or failed in their community. They were also asked to offer their advice to other communities contemplating bond elections in their community.

Findings

The findings of this study are based on interviews of the representative participants of the four school districts. According to the findings, representatives from every school district participating in this study cited the importance of an organized committee representing a good cross-section of the community. Participants indicated the need for bond support groups to identify "yes" voters and make sure the show up on election day. Effective internal and external communication on the part of school officials and community support was perceived by respondents to be a major factor affecting the outcome of school bond elections. Nearly all subjects in the study mentioned the use of the media as part of campaign strategies.

Subjects representing districts with failed bond issues referred to community confusion as a major detractor to a successful bond election. Coupled with confusion, side issue and matters of local politics directly affected the promotion groups' ability to carry out a successful bond campaign.

Representatives of all school districts mentioned the process of choosing and securing the proposed school site as a factor that can directly affect chances of a successful bond election. Subjects of this study provided insights regarding tax implications and their affect on the results of the bond elections.

Conclusions

The data and perceptions gathered as part of the interview process provided the basis for the conclusions outlined in this Chapter. In addition to the responses to the structured and unstructured questions, the researcher made special note of the items considered to be of critical impact to the results of a particular election. The following conclusions were developed from the findings of the study.

What Variables Contributed to Successful Bond Elections?

Conclusions for the first question are drawn from data received from respondents representing School District A and School District B, because these districts were successful in their bond election attempts.

1. Six of eight participants, representing schools with successful bond elections, felt the promotion committee had a critical impact on the results of the election in their respective communities.

2. The superintendents of both school districts A and B believed the work of the bond campaign committee was critical to passage of their elections.

3. When asked to rank order factors that affected the results of the bond election in their communities, four of eight respondents listed the work of the committee first on the list.

4. When asked to offer advice to others contemplating a bond issue, all four respondents from School District A suggested community involvement as their first recommendation.

5. The citizen respondents of school districts A and B reported large committees, representing all segments of the community.

From these findings, the following conclusion is drawn: An organized and representative promotion committee is essential to a successful bond campaign effort.

1. All representatives reported using public meetings as part of their campaign strategy.

2. Every participant in this study suggested the need for effective communication.

3. Staff engagement was suggested by half of the respondents from school districts A and B.

From these findings, the following conclusion is drawn: In successful bond campaigns, effective internal and external communication is a factor leading to improved chances for success. Communities that receive clearly stated, honest information about the need, building design, costs, taxes, and rationale behind decisions are more likely to approve bond proposals.

1. All newspaper editors reported more positive than negative letters to the editor.

2. All newspaper editors wrote letters of support for the bond issue in their communities.

3. Every campaign committee used their local media to disseminate information to their community.

4. Newspaper editors recommended the use of their newspaper to share information.

From these findings, the following conclusion is drawn: The media are generally supportive of local bond campaigns and are willing to publicize design plans and the work of the promotion committee.

What Variables Contributed to Failed Bond Elections?

Data compiled from responses provided by School District C and School District D provide the basis for conclusions to the second research

question. They were unsuccessful in their attempts to approve a bond issue in their communities.

1. Seven of eight respondents of these two school districts reported confusion about the details of the plan.

2. The newspaper editors and bankers of school districts C and D reported a perception of high costs and taxes.

3. Voters in School District C appeared disconcerted about the choice of building site and what was to be included in the project.

From these findings, the following conclusion is drawn: Community confusion and misconceptions of components of a bond proposal can lead to failure of bond elections.

1. Respondents of School District D spoke of a concern with parochial families and their perceived lack of support for the building project.

2. The business community of School District C was not unanimous in supporting their bond issue.

3. Community groups in School District D had just promoted a new recreation center and hospital addition in their community.

4. School District C had just gone through a school merger.

From these findings, the following conclusion is drawn: Local politics and side issues are leading factors in the defeat of bond issues. This conclusion supports the strategy of a thorough canvass of the community

prior to a bond election to uncover the issues that may interfere with the campaign process.

1. Three of four respondents of School District C reported taxes as an issue in their community.

2. Voters in School District D had just approved a bond issue for a new recreation center.

From these findings, the following conclusion is drawn: If voters don't see the value of the bond proposal, they are not willing to impose higher taxes on themselves. The project needs to be seen as necessary and cost effective.

What Variables Can Be Identified with Regard to Selected Characteristics of School Districts?

1. Four of the eight respondents of school districts A and B reported opposition groups.

2. Every respondent from school districts A and B praised the work of their committee in getting positive voters to the polls.

3. Superintendents of school districts A and B reported using poll watchers to be sure "yes" voters cast their votes.

These findings support the conclusion that the strategy of concentrating on "yes" voters and making sure they vote is fundamental to a successful campaign. The literature and the findings of this study

substantiate the premise that communities who successfully approve bond referendums make an extra effort to identify the supporters and monitor the voting precinct to be sure they show up on election day. Most campaign efforts will have some kind of opposition; therefore, it is important to make sure a sufficient number of supporters cast their votes.

1. Representatives of school districts C and D reported concerns about the choice of school site.

2. Participants representing every district reported suggestions for making sure the public understands the reason for decisions regarding building and site.

From these findings, a conclusion can be drawn that the process for choosing the site, the cost of the site, and timing for purchase of the proposed site seem to be factors affecting the outcome of bond issues.

1. The timing for hiring an architect ranged from 12 to 18 months before the election.

2. School District B did not use the services of an architect in the planning process.

It is concluded that when an architect is hired is insignificant to election results.

1. School District A proposed the highest tax rate increase, but passed by the highest margin.

2. School District D proposed the lowest tax rate increase, yet the measure failed.

It is concluded that a tax increase is a factor that can affect the outcome of a bond election, however, the amount of increase is not the most significant tax implication affecting election results.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with much of the literature that emphasizes the importance of the promotion committee. Committee work was the basis of the comprehensive marketing strategies purported by Graham et al. (1990). It is also important for committee members to know their role within the committee, with effective leaders at the helm. The findings of this study supports the claims of Barney (1994) that the committee must be unanimous in its support for the project. If the project team and bond promotion committee are citizen driven, the chances of approval increase (Armstrong, 1994).

As the Dain Bosworth (1996) report demonstrated, demographics play an insignificant role in election outcomes; therefore, it is incumbent on bond promoters to identify "yes" voters and make sure they vote. Respondents of every school district in this study saw the importance of canvassing the community to ensure the needed number of positive votes are present to carry the proposal at election time. Henry (1987) researched the common

attributes of schools that won elections. She found that 84 percent of schools with successful bond used the strategy of identification of supporters.

In this study, the two districts that approved their bond referendums believed they had an effective communication process in place before and during the campaign process. School District B published a detailed booklet and made extensive use of the media. The committee chairman of School District A was a well respected community leader, with strong communication skills. Stanley (1980) suggested that the school district tune up its public relations program as the first step in the bond promotion process.

The media is a strong force in every community. Newspapers and television, in particular, have a regular following and have the power to influence that audience. In smaller communities, the local newspaper is the communication arm of community organizations. Generally, the media supports school bond issues, especially when the promotion committee and school board works with the media and invites reporters to planning and strategy meetings. Puzey (1986) listed use of the media as one the predominant factors in achieving voter approval of bond issues.

Voter confusion and local politics were identified as factors contributing to failure of school bond issues. These two issues can become intertwined with tax issues. This was the case for school districts C and D as reported by their respective representatives. Every community is different, therefore,

strategies for addressing side issues, local politics, and school needs have to be specific to the individual school district. Graham et al. (1990) suggested that before board members embark on a school bond campaign, they should analyze their customers well in advance of the election. A simple community survey serves two purposes: (1) it raises the community's level of awareness that something is under consideration; (2) the results give an indication of the issues of the community. Henry (1994) asserted that a community survey is critical, because each community is unique in terms of its beliefs, needs, and values.

In this study, the two districts with failed bond issues referred to concerns with the site as factors in the defeat of their bond issue. School districts A and B mentioned building location had been an issue in previous bond attempts in their districts. It seems worthy to mention site issues as factors affecting the outcome of school bond elections. Groups contemplating a school bond election might want to follow the suggestions offered by Armstrong (1994) regarding the use of a community project team to make preliminary project recommendations to the board. The project team should conduct a study of site selection, building size, how many rooms and how they function, construction options, necessary permits, and location of utilities.

The districts selected for this study had various opinions about the use of the architect in the campaign process and the effect it had on the election

outcome. An architect played an integral role in the committee work in School District A. School District B used a building consultant in their planning process and did not hire an architect until after the measure was approved by voters. It appears that the choice and use of an architect is not of great significance in predicting the outcome of a bond election. Graham et al. (1990) suggested using the architect as the "expert" on building design that matches the needs and desires of the community. Armstrong (1994) promoted the idea of bringing an architect on the scene after the project team had set the stage for what the district needed.

A school district cannot avoid discussing taxes as part of bond campaigning. According to the findings of this study, tax implications became less of an issue when citizens realized the need and value of the project under consideration. Various sources outlined in Chapter 2 told of examples where school districts approved bond issues on the heels of tax hikes in their communities (see Chopra, 1988; Hamel, 1984; Kreiner et al., 1995; and Koontz, 1980). They were able to approve bond issues, because the community valued the project and were willing to impose additional taxes upon themselves to meet the needs of their schools.

This study was a replication of a study done by Holt in 1993 at the University of South Dakota. The findings of this study were consistent with those of Holt with a few exceptions.

Holt determined from his findings that the amount of tax rate increase is a critical factor to the success of a bond election. He concluded that tax rate increases exceeding $2.00 per one thousand dollars of valuation decreased the chances of a successful election. However, in this study, the voters in school districts A and B approved tax increases of $3.65 and $2.70 per one thousand dollars respectively. All participants in this study shared citizens' concern about increased taxes, but felt the amount of tax increase was not a critical factor in the success or failure of their elections.

In his study, Holt concluded that design and location of new constructions were important, but not critical to the outcome of school bond elections in the communities he surveyed. The superintendents of all four school districts included in this study cited site selection and building design as critical factors in their bond attempts. Representatives of school districts A and B believed their previous failed attempts were due in large part to the factors of location and type of facility. All participants of this study representing school District C believed this issue to be the principal factor leading to the failure of their bond election.

Districts contemplating a school bond issue could make use of the conclusions offered in this chapter. Because each district is unique, these conclusions may need to be adapted to maximize their effectiveness in a particular school district.

Recommendations

The need to replace aging and inefficient school buildings is evident, but the process for approving bond issues is a major challenge in nearly every community. The literature review and the findings of this study substantiate the difficulty of approving bond issues in school districts. In order to approve measures for new construction, school and community representatives are turning to marketing strategies. The following recommendations are offered to school administrators, school board members, and community leaders who may be involved in developing a bond issue campaign.

Recommendations for Action

1. Administrators and school board members need the foresight and authority to be sure their respective committee represents a good cross section of the community, led by respected and influential people, is unanimous in supporting the project, and receives some background and training in electioneering.

2. The campaign efforts must be education-focused. Communities will support construction projects, costing millions of dollars, only when they see value in the projects.

3. Campaign committees should canvass their community ahead of the promotion process to learn of local politics and side issues that may exist in the community.

4. Higher property taxes will likely be an issue in the bond campaign process. School and community leaders need to lobby their legislators to seek other options for funding school construction, e.g. local option sales tax, income surtax.

5. Iowa and many other states require a 60 percent supermajority to approve bond issues. School and community leaders need to lobby their legislators to lower the approval barrier to a simple majority

6. School planners need to take great care in selection of the site for new construction to be sure the community understands the reason for the choice of location and the terms and conditions for obtaining that site. It might be wise to involve the community in the selection process and go to great lengths to publicize that involvement.

7. Write brochures and other publications in simple, straightforward terms that are easily understood by the average citizen.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Further studies should be done with only citizen campaign committees, representing several communities, that have been involved with

bond issues. These studies should concentrate on factors and advice regarding the success or failure of their elections.

2. A study of the perceptions of architects involved with successful and unsuccessful bond issues would offer additional insights into strategies that affect the outcomes of bond elections.

3. This study should be replicated in other states in order to broaden the scope of research available to communities contemplating school bond elections.

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Appendix A

1997 Code of Iowa Citations

Appendix A
1997 Code of Iowa
Chapter 75.1 and Chapter 298.18

CHAPTER 75 – AUTHORIZATION AND SALE OF PUBLIC BONDS

Chapter 75.1 – Bonds-election-vote required

When a proposition to authorize an issuance of bonds by a county, township, school corporation, city, or by any local board or commission, is submitted to the electors, such proposition shall not be deemed carried or adopted, anything in the statutes notwithstanding, unless vote in favor of such authorization is equal to at least sixty percent of the total votes cast for and against said proposition at said election.

All ballots cast and not counted as a vote for or against the proposition shall not be used in computing the total vote cast for and against said proposition.

When a proposition to authorize an issuance of bonds has been submitted to the electors under this section and the proposal fails to gain approval by the required percentage of votes, such proposal, or any proposal which incorporates any portion of the defeated proposal, shall not be submitted to the electors for a period of six months from the date of such regular or special election.

CHAPTER 298 – SCHOOL TAXES AND BONDS

Chapter 298.18 – Bond tax-election-leasing buildings

The amount estimated and certified to apply on principal and interest for any one year may exceed two dollars and seventy cents per thousand dollars of assessed value by the amount approved by voters of the school corporation, but not exceeding four dollars and five cents per thousand of assessed value of the taxable property within any school corporation, provided that the qualified voters of such school corporation have first approved such increased amount at a special election, which may be held at the same time as the regular school election. The proposition submitted to the voters at such special election shall be in substantially the following form:

Shall the board of directors of the ..... (insert name of school corporation) in the County of ....., State of Iowa, be authorized to levy annually a tax exceeding ..... dollars and ..... cents per thousand

dollars, but not exceeding ..... dollars and ..... cents per thousand dollars of the assessed value of the taxable property within the school corporation to pay the principal of and interest on bonded indebtedness of said school corporation, it being understood that the approval of this proposition shall not limit the source of payment of the bonds and interest but shall only operate to resitrict the amount of bonds which may be issued?

Appendix B

Exploratory Data Analysis

Appendix B
Exploratory Data Analysis

Based largely on J.W. Tukey's Exploratory Data Analysis, 1970/71. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

This short course does not exist to make the case that exploratory data analysis is useful. Rather it exists to expose its participants to a considerable variety of techniques for looking more effectively at one's data. The examples are not intended to be complete case histories. Rather, they show isolated techniques in action on real data. The emphasis is on general techniques rather than specific problems.

A basic problem about data is to make it more easily and effectively handlable by minds-our minds, her mind, his mind. To this general end:

* anything that makes a simpler description possible makes the description
more easily handlable.

* anything that looks below the previously described surface makes the description more effective.

So we shall always be glad (a) to simplify description and (b) to describe one-layer deeper.

In particular:

* to be able to say that we looked one layer deeper and found nothing is a definite step forward (though not as far as to be able to say that we looked deeper and saw thus and such).

* to be able to say that if we change our point of view things are simpler is always a gain (though not quite as much as to say that if we don't bother to change our point of view (some other) things are equally simple).

In this last connection, we regard learning that log pressure is almost a straight line in the negative reciprocal of absolute temperature is a real gain, as compared to saying that pressure increases with temperature at an ever-growing rate. Equally we regard being able to say that a batch of values is roughly symmetrically distributed on a log scale is much better than to say that the raw values have a very skew distribution.

* In rating ease of description, after almost any reasonable change of point of view, as very important, we are essentially asserting a belief inquantitative knowledge—a belief that most of the key questions in our world sooner or later demand answers to "by how much?" rather than to "in which direction?"

Consistent with this view, we believe, is a clear demand that pictures should force their messages upon us. Pictures of reassurance—"security blankets"—are frequently not worth the space they take. Pictures that have to be gone over with a reading glass to see the main point are wasteful of time and inadequate of effect. The greatest value of a picture is when it forces us to notice what we never expected to see.

We shall not take time trying to say why specific techniques are the ones to use. Besides pressure of time, there are specific reasons for this. Many of the techniques are less than ten years old in the present form. It is most unlikely that all are beyond improvement, and where a technique is very good, it is not at all certain that we know why it is. And in the few cases where we know a technique is very good, and we believe we know exactly why this is so, why will the use do better in its use for knowing this why?

We have tried to be reasonably consistent wherever this seemed reasonable and not where it doesn't. Apparent consistency helps with easy learning and correct remembering, but ought not be allowed to outweigh noticeable differences in performance.

In summary, then we:

* present techniques, not case histories.
* regard simple descriptions as good in themselves.
* feel free to ask for changes in point of view in order to gain such simplicity
* regard every description (always incomplete!) as something to be lifted off and looked under.
* will leave most interpretations of results to whomever are experts in the subject-matter field involved.
* regard consistency from one technique to another as desirable, not essential.

John W. Tukey
August 10, 1975

Appendix C

Letter to Superintendents

UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH DAKOTA
414 EAST CLARK STREET ♦ VERMILLION SD 57069-2390

DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
(605) 677-5260 FAX (605) 677-5438
pvik@usd.edu

Phil Vik, Chair

Appendix C
Letter to Superintendents

June, 1998

Superintendent of Schools
School District
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Superintendent:

As a doctoral student at the University of South Dakota, and in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree, I would like your assistance in gathering information in regard to your recent bond issue. I would like to interview you, a member of your citizen committee, a local newspaper editor, and a local banker to gather perceptions of the factors, which influenced the results of the bond election. The information from the interviews will be used as part of my research for my dissertation entitled, "Factors Affecting the Outcomes of School Bond Elections in Iowa."

Your school district meets the criteria of my study; therefore, I hope you will be able to assist me. Any information obtained from the interview process will be maintained in strictest confidence. Neither you, your school district, nor other persons interviewed will be identified in any way in the research study, reports, or any publications. Participation in the interviews is informed consent for you and the other participants.

Since you are most familiar with your community, I am asking for your help in identifying and notifying the other persons in your community who could provide pertinent information regarding your bond issue. Each interview is expected to take about 20 minutes. With permission of the interviewee, the interview will be tape-recorded. I would also appreciate copies of any brochures, flyers, advertising, newsletters, or anything important used by persons in your community who were working on the bond issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this research project. I believe the information gained from this study will be beneficial to communities contemplating school bond issues. If you have any questions, please contact me at (712) 225-6767 (office) or (712) 225-2056 (home)

Sincerely yours,

Marlin D. Lode
Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Phil Vik
Advisor

Appendix D

Interview Scripts

Appendix D
Interview Scripts

Interviewee: Superintendent of Schools

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in the interview serves as your informed consent. You may terminate this interview at any time you choose. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the specific answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you perceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of a school bond issue campaign.

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the bond election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate number, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate that a factor had a critical impact on the election for as many or as few questions as you feel appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview.)

Critical Impact

1. How many dollars were requested in this bond election? _____ million _____

2. Number of YES votes? _____ _____

3. Number of NO votes? _____ _____

4. Percentage of voter turnout? _____ % _____

5. This was the _____ attempt at passing this project? _____

6. What was the Board of Education vote on authorizing this election?____ to _____ _____

7. On what month, day and year did the public vote occur? _____ _____

8. Was a bond consultant used on this project? Yes or No _____

9. How many months prior to the election was the architect hired? _____months _____

10. Other than a bond consultant, was an outside consultant used? Yes or No. _____

11. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referendum? _____

_____

12. How many square feet were included in this project? _____ _____ square feet

13. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No _____

14. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this bond election? Yes or No _____

15. Was a citizen's group actively working against this bond election? Yes or No _____

16. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this bond election? Yes or No _____

17. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No _____

18. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No _____

19. Were public meetings held to answer questions on this project prior to the election? Yes or No _____

20. What was the proposed bond levy increase that was promoted during the campaign? _____
$ _____ per $1,000 valuation

21. Were there other forms of financing such as PPEL funds or gifts used for the construction debt on this project? Yes or No _____

If yes, please identify.

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Superintendent of Schools

In this portion of the interview, I will ask open-ended questions to obtain information in regard to your perceptions of such issues as: (1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and (2) what advice you would give to others preparing for a bond election.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will allow you to provide in-depth responses regarding feelings and attitudes about the issue.

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Script for Structured Interview

Interviewee: Citizens Committee Member

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in the interview will serve as your informed consent. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you preceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of the school bond issue campaign.

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the bond election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate answer, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate "critical impact" for as many or as few items as you believe is appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview.)

Critical Impact

1. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referendum? _____ _____

2. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No _____

3. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this election? Yes or No _____

4. Was a citizen's group actively working against this project? Yes or No _____

5. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this election? Yes or No _____

6. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No _____

7. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No _____

8. Were public meetings held to answer questions on this project prior to the election? Yes or No _____

9. How were you selected to serve on the citizen's committee? _____

10. What was the makeup of the membership of this committee? _____

11. What activities did your committee utilize? _____

12. How did the committee determine their activities? _____

13. How were funds obtained to finance your efforts? _____

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Citizens Committee Member

In this portion of the interview, I will ask open-ended questions to obtain information in regard to your perceptions of such issues as: (1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and (2) what advice you would give to others preparing for a bond election.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will allow you to provide in-depth responses regarding feelings and attitudes about the issue.

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What activities do you feel contributed to "yes" voters coming to the polls?

Question 3: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Script for Structured Interview

Interviewee: Newspaper Editor

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in this interview serves as informed consent. You may terminate this interview at any time you choose. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the election. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the answers to the questions, I would iike you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you preceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of a school bond issue campaign.

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate answer, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate "critical impact" for as many or as few items as you believe is appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview and that you will be recording his or her responses at that time.)

Critical Impact

1. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referendum? _____
   _____

2. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No _____

3. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this election? Yes or No _____

4. Was a citizen's group actively working against this project? Yes or No _____

5. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this election? Yes or No _____

6. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No _____

7. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No _____

8. Did you receive letters to the editor supporting the bond issue? Yes or No _____

9. What was the major reason these writers supported the issue? _____

10. Did you receive letters to the editor opposing the bond issue? Yes or No _____

11. What was the major reason these writers opposed the issue? _____

12. Did you or a member of your staff write an editorial on the bond issue? Yes or No _____

13. Did the editorial support or oppose the bond issue?

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Newspaper Editor

In this portion of the interview, I will ask open-ended questions to obtain information in regard to your perceptions of such issues as: (1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and (2) what advice you would give to others preparing for a bond election.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will allow you to provide in-depth responses regarding feelings and attitudes about the issue.

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What did you perceive was the attitude of the general public to the bond issue?

Question 3: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Script tor Structured Interview

Interviewee: Banker

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of South Dakota. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in this interview will serve as informed consent. You may terminate this interview at any time you choose. There are two parts to the interview. The first portion deals with the specifics of this particular school bond election, and the second part deals more with your perceptions about the eiection. The entire interview will last approximately 20 minutes. Do you have any questions? (Answer any questions.)

In this first part of the interview, I will be asking you a series of questions concerning the recent school bond election in your district and recording your responses on this form. The questions for this portion of the interview will ask for specific data about the election campaign. In addition to the answers to the questions, I would like you to indicate when you feel the factor being discussed in the question had a critical impact on your bond election campaign. Critical impact is defined as a factor you perceived had a significant impact on the success or failure of the school bond issue campaign

For example, I might ask you how many people in the community participated in meetings about the election. You may feel that either a lack of participation or good participation had a critical impact on the outcome of the election. After giving the appropriate answer, you may simply say that you felt this participation had a critical impact. You may indicate "critical impact" for as many or as few items as you believe is appropriate.

Do you have any questions before I begin? (Answer any questions.)

(If the interviewee wishes to go into depth on the following questions, indicate that you will be returning to some of the same issues during the unstructured portion of the interview and that you will be recording his/her responses at that time.)

Critical Impact

1. What type of facility or combination of facilities was included in this referendum? _____ _____

2. Was an athletic gymnasium included in this project? Yes or No _____

3. Was a citizen's group actively promoting this election? Yes or No _____

4. Was a citizen's group actively working against this project? Yes or No _____

5. Was a telephone campaign utilized to inform voters of this election? Yes or No _____

6. Was a door-to-door canvass of the community utilized to promote this issue? Yes or No _____

7. Was a poll watcher utilized? Yes or No _____

8. Were public meetings held to answer questions on this project prior to the election? Yes or No _____

9. Were you consulted by citizens concerning the financial feasibility of the bond issue? Yes or No _____

Unstructured Interview

Interviewee: Banker

In this portion of the interview, I will ask open-ended questions to obtain information in regard to your perceptions of such issues as: (1) the reasons certain factors had an impact on the results of the bond issue; and (2) what advice you would give to others preparing for a bond election.

This portion of the interview will include but not be limited to the following questions and will allow you to provide in-depth responses regarding feelings and attitudes about the issue.

Question 1: Identify in rank order the factors you perceive as having the most impact on the results of this bond issue.

Question 2: What did you perceive was the attitude of the general public to the bond issue?

Question 3: What was the general state of economy in this community at the time of this election?

Question 4: What was the impact of the bond issue on the business climate of the community?

Question 5: What advice would you give to others preparing for a bond issue campaign?

Appendix E

Letter of Permission to Replicate Study

Dakota Valley School District No. 61-8

Administration Center
1150 Northshore Drive
North Sioux City, SD 57049
Phone: (605) 232-3190 Fax: (605) 232-3198

I61

North
Central
Association
K-12 ACCREDITED

Board of Education Members
Don Fuxa, President
Kathy Gunderson, Vice-President
Paul Dailey
Dave Mitchell
Dave Reiff

Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Carleton R. Holt

Business Manager
Tricia M. Tarrell

Special Services Director
Keith Ashmore

June 19, 1998

Marlin Lode
5245 Crest Drive
Cherokee, IA 51012

Dear Marlin,

This letter is authorization allowing you to replicate my 1993 dissertation, entitled "Factors Affecting the Outcomes of School Bond Elections in South Dakota." It is my understanding that you will replicate this study in the state of Iowa.

As per our telephone conversation, it is also agreed that you will allow the findings of your Iowa study to be utilized in publishing and consulting efforts of Dr. Floyd Boschee and myself, Dr. Carleton R. Holt.

I want to wish you the very best in your study, and look forward to reviewing your results.

Sincerely,

Carleton R. Holt, Ed.D.
Superintendent

CRH/pag

Preparing Children for their Tomorrows
DAKOTA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Appendix F

Human Subjects Approval

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA
HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

CERTIFICATION OF REVIEW / APPROVAL

PROJECT TITLE: Factors Affecting the Outcomes of School Bond Elections in Iowa

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Marlin Lode and Dr. Phil Vik

DATE SUBMITTED: July 8, 1998

PROJECT PERIOD: July 13, 1998-September 1, 1998

TYPE OF REVIEW: Exempt

RISK INVOLVED: Minimal

APPROVAL/COMMENTS: This protocol was reviewed and approved as confidential survey research.

FOLLOWUP REVIEW OF THIS PROPOSAL IS SCHEDULED FOR: July 1999

IF ANY CHANGES IN PROCEDURES ARE CONTEMPLATED OR PROBLEMS ARISE THAT WOULD INCREASE THE RISKS INVOLVED OR THAT WOULD NECESSITATE A CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATION, PLEASE DISCONTINUE THE STUDY AND NOTIFY THE HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER APPROVAL.

THIS REVIEW WAS CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES STIPULATED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA'S ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH US DHHS REGULATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS. (45 CFR 46)

CERTIFICATION OF USD HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE AND/OR EXPEDITED REVIEW ACTION:

_____ _____
Chairperson, USD Human Subjects Committee **Date**

CERTIFICATION OF 'EXEMPT' REVIEW ACTION:

E Howard Cohen 7-14-98
USD Research Compliance Officer **Date**

Appendix G

Selected Direct Participant Quotes

Appendix G
Selected Direct Participant Quotes

The following selected quotes were offered by particpants of this study. The purpose for presenting these quotes is to provide readers the opportunity to listen to comments shared by the participants, in their own words. These quotes are in regard to factors they believed contributed to the success or failure of bond elections in their communities.

Citizen Committee Chairman, School District A:

"Adopt a slogan for your campaign. Our slogan was 'Schools Help Build Communites, Communites Build Schools'."

"Don't talk about what happens to old school buildings. Instead explain how new buildings enhance the educational program."

Newspaper Editor, School District A:

"I believe our citizen committee really listened to people. Even if you don't agree, at least let people have their say."

"Do it right the first time. The second and third bond attempts are harder and tend to be more devisive with each attempt.

Banker, School District A:

"Do an honest campaign -- answer every question, give people the good news and bad news."

Citizen Committee Chairman, School District B:

"Create a good cadre of volunteers for your committee. Make sure: you have enough volunteers; you raise plenty of money; members show up for meetings; and they support the issue in the community."

Superintendent, School District B:

"In previous unsuccessful bond attempts, people said they did not have confidence in the board and administration and didn't see the logic in the proposal. Our committee selected a new chairman and we [the board and adminstration] turned it over to the committee and it passed."

Banker, School District B:

"Be careful if your community is too quiet about the issue. That is a sign that they are not supporting it."

Citizen Committee Chairman, School District C:

"I believe we could have been successful if our committee had done its homework by providing better information regarding taxes, history of the school district, and other details that supported the need."

Superintendent, School District C:

"Our issue was just too complicated, too many issues to confuse voters."

Newspaper Editor, School District C:

"Don't come up with a plan and then try to sell it. Allow the community to be part of the planning from start to finish."

"Very few people believe we don't need new schools, we just have to figure out the right plan and get 'yes' voters to show up on election day."

Citizen Committee Chairman, School District D:

"Good school buildings are part of economic development."

"Don't compromise on the building plan to try to appease one group, because you probably will upset another by doing so."

Newspaper Editor, School District D:

"Our committee needed to provide more information. Some people in our community didn't even know which grades were affected."

Banker, School District D:

"It is important to have committee members who can communnicate to every group in the community. Our blue collar groups did not support our bond issue."